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Editorial . . .

Clarence V. Hunter

Prayer is based on the recognition that there are two alternatives afforded the praying individual. Although both faith and prayer are voluntary actions, fatalism and prayer cannot be parts of the same moral realm. If God has predestined everything in terms of man being unable to do anything about changing his activity or choice, then it follows that answers to prayer are impossible. That is, in any system of moral government which has as its central idea necessity, there is no possible place for either faith or prayer. In the light of Scriptural emphasis on the importance of praying, as well as on the certainty of answers to prayer, it is correct to affirm that whatever one believes about God's decrees, the meaning of such decrees must not negate the possibility of answered prayer. Otherwise, our Heavenly Father has no point in stating through James 4:2b "You have not, because you do not pray" (Weymouth).

> The true immutability of God. . .consists, not in his adherence to his purposes, but in his never changing the principles of administration; and he may therefore in perfect accordance with his preordination of things, and the immutability of his nature, purpose to do, under certain conditions dependent upon the free agency of man, what he will not do under others; and for this reason, that an immutable adherence to the principles of a wise, just, and gracious government requires it.[1]

Therefore, whenever God purposes to do anything to a nation or to an individual, a change in the conduct of the nation or of the individual necessitates a corresponding change in the activity of God towards that nation or person. The fact that God does change his actions toward people is illustrated in the life of Nineveh. In spite of the fact that he had pronounced sentence against this city: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown."[2] God changed his activity toward them as a result

[1]Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes*, Vol. II, New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1882, p 492
[2]Jonah 3:4.

of people changing. The account continues:

> "So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth. . .and God saw their works that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."[3]

The Lord likewise changes his attitude toward every individual when that individual repents of and forsakes his evil ways and receives pardon of his sins. His wrath no longer rests upon the individual as an unbeliever.[4]

The second principle involves this: how does God answer prayer when natural law cannot be changed, suspended or interrupted in its action? This is answered by noting that just as in performing a miracle God does not violate a natural law, but rather transcends it, so in answering prayer he "goes beyond" the existing law. The law of gravitation brings a tossed ball to the earth, but what happens when a boy inserts a barrier in the form of a bat? The ball obeys the boy's will, and is sent in another direction, without reversing or suspending any law. Thus, since such things are so easy and simple in common experiences of life, how much easier it is to understand how God answers any prayer prayed according to His will, and that does not violate the laws of the spiritual realm.

Now prayer is not necessarily answered by processes of natural law, but is answered by the Lord in removing the subject of prayer from the control of natural law which governs it in its existing condition, and placing it under the domain of other laws which regulate the spiritual realm. Therefore, an answer to prayer implies much more than simply a psychological satisfaction received by the one praying. An answer to prayer is the compliance of a loving Father with the request of His dependent and needy child. This compliance may be in harmony with natural laws, as in the supplying us with our daily bread or it may be a direct expression of supernatural power as in healing the leper, or as in regenerating a seeking soul, or as in sanctifying a consecrated believer. In any event, let it be remembered that there are no physical barriers to God's power with people.

In the experience of praying one basic fact should be recalled: the distance between God and His alienated children is not represented in terms of any space-measurement, but in terms of moral quality. When Adam fell through disobeying God's

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[3]Jonah 3:5, 10.

[4]Cf. John 3:36.

word, man was driven from the garden, which would imply space-distance; but it was the "moral" distance that separated God from man. This moral distance is conditionally erased by Christ's death upon the cross, but it awaits each person appropriating through prayer and faith the benefits of this redemption, and once salvation comes to the individual, obedience to God's word will be his personal experience. Jesus states: "If a man love me, he will keep my words,"[5] and adds "if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you: and all things whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."[6]

These Scriptures clearly indicate that the relationship between God and His disciple is a close relationship which reminds us that the gospel was instituted to bring a race, which had gotten morally far away from home, back to the Father's house, and to restore to man the confidential relations which existed between Adam and God at the beginning. The greatest relationship possible anywhere is a relationship of mutual confidence, and it is this very confidence that the Lord promises to bring to anyone who will return to his allegience to Divine government. It is in this state of mutual confidence that the Father delights in fulfilling His promises in answer to a disciple's prayer and exercise of faith. Such mutual confidence has been properly referred to as "perfect faith," and described so appropriately as "a continuous act or condition of the soul, in which no shadow of doubt is ever visible, and in which the soul is so transparent that no foul suspicion lurks anywhere in its depth."[7]

No sinner in his prayer for pardon can hope to be successful until he is willing to abandon the life of sinning which he has been pursuing, and to have a pure motive in surrendering to Christ. Moreover, the pure motive must be retained and maintained if the disciple's prayer is to be answered. Regarding iniquity in the heart cuts off answer to prayer,[8] and it was precisely this attitude and motive which prevented God from answering the people of James 4:3. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In other words, any effort on the part of anybody to secure Divine help in any enterprise for the selfish purposes of the worker is destined to fail. The underlying motive of all prayer must be that of exalting Christ and thus pleasing the Father.

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[5]John 14:23.
[6]John 15:7; Mt. 21:22.
[7]W. Jones, *The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification*, 1885, p. 88.
[8]Psalm 66:18.

Prayer as well as faith is a necessity for successful evangelism, but it is imperative to realize that prayer is not the way to God. There is no power in faith, and no power in prayer, per se; these connect the soul with the living source of all power, the Lord Jesus Christ. He said to the disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations. . .I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:18-20). Thus, prayer awakens and enhances an individuals' dormant energies, and puts him in a state of expectancy, and at the same time moves God in compassion toward the petitioner. If one believes that God will answer, he becomes increasingly anxious, and assumes a receptive attitude. God responds to his desire, manifests His power, saves the sinner, sanctifies the believer, comforts the sorrowing, and/or delivers the tempted. In all prayer, therefore, is the element of faith which is the bridge which spans the chasm between the promises and the Promiser. Any obstruction that weakens this bridge, or any "sickness" or indolence in prayer, correspondingly limits supplies from heaven and if not reinforced by fulfilling God's conditions of true prayer, the answers will eventually cease altogether, and the spiritual life will perish.

Prayer goes up to the throne with thanksgiving and the Holy Spirit brings fresh supplies of grace. Again prayer goes up and places the soul's needs at the mercy seat; lays down its burden of sorrow, of disappointment, of affliction, at the feet of Christ, and the Holy Spirit comes in with comfort, strength, wisdom and joy. To increase the results of answered prayer requires an increased knowledge of the Word, "for faith cometh through hearing, and hearing through the word of God" (Romans 10:17). It is the Word that assures the Christian that he need not doubt concerning whether it is the will of God that people be saved and sanctified. The Lord is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9b); "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). Evangelism awaits prayers by people who can plead God's Word in full assurance that what He has promised He is able and ready to perform. To give us added guarantee that He will answer, the Word states: "This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14.15). Pray! Believe! Have faith in God, and evangelism will change multitudes of people.

The Lord's Prayer: AN INTERPRETATION

Frank Laubach

The disciples said, "Lord, teach us how to pray." Then he taught them what is now known as the Lord's Prayer. This is the most repeated prayer in the world. It is repeated probably more often than all the other Christian prayers put together. You hear it in church at least once every Sunday, and sometimes even two or three times in one service. It is the most repeated, but it is the least understood.

In the first place, people are thinking primarily of themselves and their immediate neighbors when they pray that prayer--if they think at all. But it is far more than a prayer for our locality. It is a world prayer. It begins with the letter "O," and that "O" is the world. "Our Father" is the father of the whole human race. When we think only of ourselves or our friends or our community, we are not praying the Lord's Prayer. This prayer is not an American prayer alone. Jesus never came to the United States--unless the Mormons are right! This prayer was first uttered in Palestine, at the east end of the Mediterranean where the world is at this moment in greatest danger. But Jesus was not thinking just of that area. "Our Father" included every country and every race.

"Who art in Heaven." He was the Father of all heavens as well as all the earth, the creator and the king of the universe.

"Hallowed be Thy name," means "May thy name be honored and held sacred and loved." The first thing that one notices is that this is not a prayer in the sense of asking God for something that we want; it is agreeing with God in something that he wants. It is a prayer to help God and to help us.

God's name will not be honored and loved unless people believe that he is loving and lovable. Where they have not seen God in Jesus, they have a much lower conception of him than we do who have seen him in Jesus.

If God is as good as Jesus, as loving and as compassionate, then it is easy to love him, and revere him, and hallow his name. But if God is like the demons that one reads about and

sees pictured on the walls of the temples of other religions, it is difficult to hallow his name, or to love him. And so, if we really mean "Hallowed be thy name," we must help the world to know Jesus and to see God in him.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." This again is not asking God for something that we want; it is offering to help God with what he wants. It is enlisting; it is saying, "God, I am back of you, and I will help you bring your kingdom upon earth."

We begin to see that the Lord's Prayer is not merely a petition for something; it is offering ourselves, dedicating ourselves to God to help him.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." How much is his will done in heaven? We never knew until we saw Jesus who came down out of heaven. In the Gospel of John, Jesus says forty-nine times in forty-nine different ways, that he never does a thing, never says a thing, never thinks a thing, excepting what the Father asks him to say and do and think. That is the way God's will is done in heaven, perfectly, totally, endlessly. Heaven is not a democracy; God does not run for election. It is absolute, far more than any kingdom on this earth ever was. Everybody wants to obey the will of God because they know that he is perfectly wise and that he is perfectly loving. The slightest deviation from his will would be less than right and less than good, and less than loving and less than perfect. The Lord's Prayer says, "I will help you, God, to bring your will tp pass on earth as completely as it is done in heaven. And that of course means that I will begin in myself. But it does not mean I will end in myself. It means that I will dedicate myself to helping his kingdom and his will wherever he needs me most."

Everyone of us must make a tremendous decision in his life. The natural man in us seeks comforts and satisfactions; he wants the world to serve him. But when he understands the call of Christ, he abandons this quest of self-satisfaction and devotes himself to helping save the world. All of us have to make the same decision that Jesus asked the rich young ruler to make when he said to this good young man, "You lack one thing. Go and sell the home where you are so comfortable, and help the poor. Then come and follow me out where I am trying to help the world up toward the kingdom."

Now let us examine the next part of the Lord's Prayer. "Give us this day our daily bread." Is not that asking something for ourselves? If it is, then in the United States we might as well cut it out of the Lord's Prayer, because our problem

in America is not to find our daily bread, but how to have will-power to stop eating so much bread. We have a surplus of eight billion dollars worth of wheat and corn and other food products that we cannot consume; and we do not know how to get rid of it. The problem of nearly everybody in America is how to keep down overweight. We buy books on how to stop eating too much! But on the other side of the world, in Asia and Africa, they are hungry. "Give us this day our daily bread" is needed then. Half the world goes to bed every night hungry because their cupboards are bare. The little children moan all night for food which their impoverished parents are not able to give them. In Asia where Jesus first uttered this prayer for daily bread it still has tremendous meaning. The world is in danger today because of this enormous imbalance. We have half of the world's wealth. We have enough surplus food to feed all the hungry people for a year; and they are obsessed every day of their lives with the problem of getting something to eat.

For every American, therefore, who says "Give us this day our daily bread" it means a promise to help God get daily bread to the underprivileged destitute half of the world. This request for daily bread brings out sharply the truth that it is not God's fault that men do not have daily bread; and it is not God who needs to work harder. It is we who need to love our neighbors in Asia and Africa as we love America enough to help them farm as well as we do.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." When we understand Jesus it is not God's forgiveness that needs to worry us. Jesus died on the cross to show us how anxious God is to forgive. But what we need on this earth is to forgive one another. Jesus said, God cannot forgive us for holding hatred. Hate is the world's worst sin. We can never have a good world until we wipe the slate clean, forget our resentments, and start afresh. And so this is an enlistment of ourselves again. We say, "God, I will help you to get rid of a world that is festering with ill-will, and to bring in a world of love instead of a world of greed and hate. I enlist behind love, and I begin in myself."

"Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil." Again it is not something we are persuading God to do. James says that God tempts no man. It is men who tempt one another. In almost every magazine and almost every newspaper, on television, radio and in motion pictures, one may hear lies told to young people about liquor that tempt them to become alcoholics. How many of us Christians ever write to our congressman to pass a bill forbidding such lies. Congress can stop it all, and

will, the moment the people demand it.

"Deliver us from evil." What evil? War, greed, hate, poverty, crime. All of them are human evils, not God's evils. And we promise in the Lord's Prayer to help him get rid of the evil first in ourselves and then in our world.

If this is a world prayer, then where in the world is the evil greatest? Where in the world is the greatest danger? In the eastern hemisphere on the opposite side of the world from the United States. If we could by some tremendous surgery cut the western hemisphere free from the eastern hemisphere and float a few million miles away, we might let the continents of Asia and Africa and Europe blow themselves up. But we are tied closer to the East by ever faster planes. The main place where we need to help deliver men from evil is the eastern hemisphere.

So we see that the Lord's Prayer is a world prayer, not a prayer for ourselves or our own country. We see that it is a pledge to give ourselves in God's redemptive cause. It is not asking God for anything; it is offering God everything. If we do not back that prayer with deeds, we are either a fraud or we are repeating it like magic without knowing what we are saying.

I hope that never again will we be able to hear the word "Our Father" without remembering that it begins with the letter "O," and that that "O" is as big as the world. And that never again will we be able to see the letter "O" anywhere without seeing the world in that "O" and remembering our promise to dedicate ourselves to helping his kingdom come on earth.

For it is a pledge, as truly as our pledge to the American flag. It means, I pledge myself to God, to help his name be hallowed, his kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven. I pledge myself to help have enough bread for the whole world, to bring forgiveness and love to the world, to prevent temptations and to stop evil wherever I may be needed most.

Men Ought Always To Pray

By J. C. McPheeters

Jesus said: "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). The disciples of Jesus were profoundly impressed with his prayer life. While beholding his prayer life they stood in the presence of a mystery which they could not fathom. They recognized a vital relationship of his prayer life to all of the remarkable things which he said and did. Prayer was a fixed habit and attitude in the life of Jesus; as fixed as the habit of breathing in sustaining the physical life of the body.

TEACH US TO PRAY

The prayer life of Jesus convicted his disciples of their impoverishment in prayer. It was following one of the periods of prayer, in which Jesus was frequently engaged, that his disciples requested him to teach them to pray. "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1). The only specific teaching request made by the disciples, of which we have a record, was concerning prayer. The request indicates that they had come to regard prayer as paramount, vital, and indispensable to Christian character and achievement. The disciples were correct in their interpretation concerning the significance of prayer. We will do well to emulate their example in this regard.

"WHEN YE PRAY"

Jesus responded to the request of his disciples by giving them certain fundamental procedures in prayer. The laboratory secrets of prayer are as real, genuine, and dependable as the laboratory secrets of nuclear energy. Jesus revealed the laboratory secrets of prayer in a pattern prayer. Jesus responded to their request by saying: "When ye pray" certain fundamental procedures are to be observed. If these procedures are not observed, prayer becomes "as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal."

"ENTER INTO THY CLOSET"

Prayer is going alone with God for a spiritual inventory. Jesus said: "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father, which is in secret; and thy father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6). Frequent inventories are essential for any successful business. Spiritual inventories are even more essential for our lives. Without the spiritual inventory of prayer life cannot have proper direction. Only the x-ray can reveal certain physical conditions in our bodies. Only by going alone in prayer can certain spiritual perspectives be reached.

"OUR FATHER"

Jesus said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matt. 6:9). Prayer, in its primary aspect, is a recognition of deity. In prayer we bow to the sovereign of the universe. David begins his prayer of praise and exaltation of the Lord, in the 8th Psalm, with these words: "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who hast set thy glory above the heavens." The exaltation of the sovereign of the universe in prayer is retroactive upon the man who prays. In the exaltation of God he lifts his own soul to a higher spiritual level.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus taught that the over-all arching purpose of prayer is to bring in the kingdom of God. Prayer should not be personal centered but kingdom centered. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). Many think of prayer as other-worldly. But Jesus taught that the objectives of prayer are in this world. This world is to be changed and transformed through prayer. We are to seek the will of God in all the relationships of life, even as his will is done in heaven.

DAILY BREAD

Prayer has a vital relationship to our daily living, even to our daily bread. "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). In prayer we recognize God as the source of all material blessings. "He sends the sunshine and the rain." He gives

the seasons. We are dependent upon the good providences of God. Without the continuation of these providences, we perish. It is ingratitude on the part of man to fail to recognize these providences in prayer.

"FORGIVE US"

Prayer is a recognition of our sinfulness and our need of forgiveness: "Forgive us our sins" (Luke 11:4). Men who do not pray, by their prayerlessness, proclaim a self-righteousness which is not real and genuine. In prayer we confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness. All men stand in need of prayer, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

TEMPTATION

Prayer is a fortification against temptation. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matt. 6:13). Temptation is not an imaginary delusion. It is one of the stern facts with which life is confronted. Moral law cannot be kept without a battle. The adversary of righteousness contests every foot of the highway of moral law. The wrecked civilizations and empires of the past stand as a tragic testimony to the futility of man's strength to meet the temptations of life. Only as men pray and seek a source of strength beyond that which is human can the temptations of life be met.

GOD'S MAGNIFICENCE

Prayer is an exaltation of God's magnificence and glory. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen" (Matt. 6:13). All glory, power, and dominion belong unto God, the creator of the heavens and of the earth. And yet, in all of his magnificent glory, God has been mindful of sinful men. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Psa. 8:3-5). The recognition which God has given to man is a high claim for the exaltation of God's magnificence and glory in prayer.

Prayer changes things. Prayer changes you You can do

nothing but pray until you have prayed; but after you have prayed, you can do more than pray.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

Prayer Evangelism

Thomas Carruth

Evangelism today is seeing many forms of effective approach in winning people to Christ. Mass evangelism, visitation evangelism, teaching evangelism, group evangelism and other forms of evangelism. All have prayer at the heart of the outreach. When those who are interested in prayer evangelism come to study this approach thoroughly they find some unique and inspiring possibilities.

Let us seek a basic definition of prayer evangelism that will give meaning and inner content to the spiritual challenge of this message. Prayer evangelism is the experience of prayer that gives God a chance to get through and transform a life through faith in Christ. Since prayer evangelism offers such a wide variety of approaches, concerns and channels of spiritual outreach, it can be readily seen that no other form of evangelism covers completely the total opportunity found in prayer evangelism.

Let us look at some of the forms of prayer evangelism:

Person for person praying. This form is as old as the Christian movement. One person becomes concerned for another and starts to call his name daily in prayer. It is interesting to note that almost every Christian you meet can recall someone praying for him before he came to Christ. Some individuals have a daily prayer list. When they know that a person has accepted Christ that notation is recorded on the prayer list. George Muller, the great man of prayer, was known to pray for one man for over sixty years. There are many persons in our churches that can be enrolled in person-for-person praying that might not participate in any other form of evangelism. The shut-ins, the young people, the children, the elderly people, every normal church member, can have a part in this form of evangelism. Person for person prayer evangelism offers the widest opportunity for enlisting the total congregation in effective evangelism.

Persons with persons praying for others. The most effective form this prayer approach has taken in modern times is in the

recovery of groups praying and working together for the conversion of others. Jesus and his disciples started out as a small group of praying persons. The early church practiced prayer group evangelism. They met in homes, caves, boats and other places. Into these prayer groups people came to find Christ. Out of these groups Christians went forth to witness to a pagan world. John Wesley's class meeting was an effective approach that used prayer, discussion and discipline. Evangelistic prayer groups are coming alive today in the heart of local churches. They are giving power, content, and sustaining momentum to Christian commitment. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them." Prayer group evangelism is proving a vital factor in bringing about a world revival in our day. In churches where other forms of evangelism seem difficult to initiate, the pastor may call around him a faithful little prayer band that will be the spiritual dynamo in starting a real spiritual awakening. Many churches have at the heart of their total program of evangelism little prayer groups that are channels of real power.

The fellowship of prayer evangelism. A whole church or community may have united prayer for evangelism. In our day we are witnessing the power of world-wide prayer fellowship. Dr. Billy Graham expressed the desire that New York City might become the most prayed-for city in the world. After more than fifty thousand persons had come forward to dedicate their lives to Christ, Dr. Graham stated publicly that world-wide prayer was the basic cause of this great spiritual tide. The writer of this article knows that persons in more than one hundred countries were contacted for prayer for the New York Crusade.

Through the Prayer Life Movement of the Methodist Church, World Wide Prayer Missions are being held. In Arlington, Virginia, a World Wide Prayer Mission was held in the spring of 1957. Prayer partners were enlisted in forty-seven states and thirty-four countries of the world. A prayer revival came to a city church and the minister stated that it was the greatest thing that had happened in the church in fifty years.

The Christian church as a dynamic evangelistic movement was born out of the prayer fellowship at Pentecost. A man stood up and preached and three thousand souls were converted. Around him was a great prayer fellowship. The deepest longing in the hearts of many pastors and laymen today is for a real revival of transforming religion to come to their church. The united prayer fellowship is the most effective approach for the

largest and deepest outreach in evangelism. Pentecost is coming again to the churches that are paying the price in united prayer.

Cumulative prayer evangelism. This simply means prayer added to prayer. This may have outreach in both time and space. One of the most effective forms of cumulative prayer is the prayer vigil. In 24-hour prayer vigils people have been converted, young men have answered the call to preach, others have rededicated their lives to Christ and local churches have taken on new life in evangelism. The current prayer vigil movement in the United States has been greatly encouraged by the Prayer Life Movement. It is estimated that more than one million persons have already participated in the prayer vigils. Both Texas and Ohio plan state-wide prayer vigils in connection with state-wide evangelism.

Cumulative prayer may be seen more clearly as you contrast it with simultaneous prayer. On September 23, 1857, in Fulton Street Chapel in New York City, Jeremiah Lanphier started a prayer meeting that led into a great spiritual movement resulting in hundreds of thousands of persons being won to Christ. This prayer meeting has been going continuously for one hundred years. This is a superb example of cumulative prayer evangelism.

SUMMARY

Prayer evangelism has adapted itself to every age, situation and type of Christian work known to man.

Prayer evangelism is not in itself in competition with any other forms of prayer evangelism or with other forms of evangelism.

Prayer evangelism must never be looked upon as a substitute for visitation, preaching or teaching. Prayer evangelism is a natural, normal ingredient of every form of Christian evangelism.

The urgency of the hour in which we live demands of the church today the spiritual power that will turn the tide of civilization away from self-destruction toward the Kingdom of God. We say with great confi dence that we believe that "united prayer evangelism is the last best hope of the human race."

For the need of this time of supreme crisis in the history of the human race, God has given us a world-wide prayer movement. That movement is appraised in these words of the great missionary to India, Dr. John T. Seamands: "The World Wide Prayer Movement is today the most significant spiritual

movement of our times."

Let us quit building fences and start building bridges that will open up avenues of united prayer that will yet enable God to send the revival he wants this world to have!

I heard the world at prayer. I heard the pleading
Of countless souls whose voices do not cease;
The urgent and insistent prayer of nations
Crying out for Universal Peace.

I heard a strong man praying for forgiveness,
I heard a woman burdened down with care
Cry out to God. Oh, I have heard earth's anguish
Made vocal in an agony of prayer.

And I have seen their gladness when the answer
Has come with mercy from the throne of God;
With full assurance that His peace is granted...
That men may walk light-hearted in earth's sod.

And there will be a great and sure revival
When mankind prays together in their need.
God! God! We lift a hallelujah chorus
For answered prayers. We praise Thee, Lord, indeed!

The Origin of the Altar Call in American Methodism

An Historical Study by Robert E. Coleman

What has come to be commonly referred to as "the altar call," or more formally as "the invitation," is a unique development in the worship of American Protestantism. It is not that the idea of publicly registering one's decision is new, for since the days that the sons of Levi gathered around Moses in response to the cry, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me,"[1] giving public expression of a decision has been familiar to all worshippers of God.

The different thing about the contemporary invitation does not lie in the principle of the appeal, but in the method of giving it. The insistence upon making a decision here and now, coming forward in a public service, kneeling or standing at the front altar for prayer, going to an "inquiry room," receiving some instruction in the meaning of salvation--these are elements in the contemporary "altar call," though not new in themselves, which nonetheless combine to give the appeal a distinctively different color peculiar to the American evangelical way of worship.

Those who study the history of Christian worship cannot help but be curious about the origin of this phenomenon. It has no clear precedent in the traditional worship of the Reformation, or even in the spiritual exercises of the Protestant revival movements in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Neither the Puritans, the Pietists, nor the Methodists, all of whom figured so prominently in setting the pattern of the spiritual life of early America, had an intrinsic notion of "the altar call" in their public order of worship. These groups transplanted to America a radical sectarian emphasis upon personal salvation which undoubtedly gave to this new method of bringing men to Christ its theological explanation. But the emergency of the modern-day invitational technique was the result of elements indigenous to the American church and society. The untamed and unrestrained influence of the new world, heightened by the surging spirit of freedom, took the

[1]Exodus 32:26; cf. Joshua 24:15; II Chronicles 34:30-32; Ezra 10:5. Jesus underscored the same principle of public acceptance in His invitation to the disciples when He said, "Follow Me," and to Zacchaeus, "Come down." Matt. 4:19; 9:9; Luke 19:5; cf. Matt. 10:32,33; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; 14:23.

spiritual emphasis of the revival sects and blazed a new and bold course of action in religion as well as in government. When finally "the altar call" became distinguishable as a pattern of worship near the close of the eighteenth century, it was an inevitable expression of an aggressively different kind of church.

Yet the altar call did not come automatically with the landing of revivalists in America. It took time for the traditional routines of worship to adjust to the new circumstances and to evolve a new practice of evangelism. Until almost the beginning of the nineteenth century, the feeling in America continued to reflect the old European conservatism which believed essentially that persons should seek salvation when and where the Spirit moved them apart from any prescribed method of coming forward for prayer and counsel. Accordingly, invitations were given to provoke conviction of sin rather than prescribe a ritual of remedy. Close, personal preaching was common, especially among the revivalists, but the people were left to work out their own salvation. Jonathan Edwards, in the revivals in Northhampton and the neighboring villages in 1733, encouraged those disturbed because of their sins to go home and to discuss their problems among themselves in small groups.[2] The Tennents, famous "Log College" preachers of the First Great Awakening, followed the practice of "counseling with their people" in their homes.[3] George Whitefield moved thousands to repentance, but left them where they were to find solace for their souls. Of course, ministers were always willing to be of assistance when asked for help, and in their sermons the most zealous of them exhorted their people to seek salvation without delay. Robert Williams, pioneer Methodist preacher, typified many evangels of his day when at the conclusion of his sermon at Bushnell's Chapel in Virginia in 1776 he "cried out in usual manner, 'Who wants a Saviour? The first that believes shall be justified.'" Characteristically "in a few minutes the house was ringing with the cries of broken-hearted sinners, and the shouts of happy believers,"[4] yet equally characteristic of the times, no effort was made to invite seekers forward to a place of refuge and comfort. They

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[2]Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton and the Neighboring Towns and Villages* (1736), Sect. I, in *Puritan Sage*, ed. by Vergilius Ferm (New York, 1953), pp. 164-176.

[3]Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of the American Tradition.* (Philadelphia, 1949), p. 59

[4]Jesse Lee, *A Short History of the Methodists in the United States of America.* (Baltimore, 1810), p. 58.

"were left to struggle with their convictions until, like the multitudes on the Day of Pentecost, they were constrained to cry out, 'Brethren, what must we do?' or until, overcome by conflicting emotions, they fell prostrate upon the ground."[5]

The practice of friends gathering around the afflicted persons to pray and offer spiritual counsel which grew out of this situation was a significant development in the evaluation of the modern-day invitation. An eye witness to a "gracious work of God" on the Brunswick circuit in 1775 was much impressed with the way people came to help those "lying helpless on the floor." He observed:

> It was truly affecting to see them collecting round the penitent sinners, and praying for them one after another, and sometimes two or three together at the same time, until some of the mourners would get up with streaming eyes, and catching in their arms those that were nearest to them, and calling upon all present to praise God, for what he had done for their souls.[6]

Usually some sympathetic persons would come to those in distress and deal with them where they were while the preaching continued. But, in time, it became customary to take the distressed persons out of the public meeting. Workers specially designated for this service would scurry to the side of those "cut down" with conviction and carry them from the sanctuary to a place where they could be dealt with away from the public distractions.[7] Satisfaction was seldom obtained without a struggle. Often persons in distress would remain for hours to pray, and not infrequently, the struggle for peace of mind would continue throughout the night.[8]

With the beginning of the Second Great Awakening toward the close of the eighteenth century, the pattern of the modern day invitation began to be clearly visible in the appeal for distressed persons to come together for prayer. What might

[5]Thomas H. Campbell, *Studies in Cumberland Presbyterian History* (Nashville, 1944), p. 47; cf. instances of this phenomenon, e.g. Reuben Ellis, "Letter," Feb. 23, 1790, in W. W. Sweet, *Religion in the American Frontier*, 1783-1840, IV, "The Methodists" (Chicago, 1946), p. 142; Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury* (New York, 1821), II, pp. 476-477; Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography*, ed. by W. P. Strictland (New York, 1856), pp. 30, 31.

[6]Jesse Lee, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

[7]An example of this practice at a Camp Meeting in 1801 is cited by C. C. Cleveland, *The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805* (Chicago, 1916), pp. 79, 80.

[8]Examples of this prior to 1800 are found in Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia* (Richmond, 1810), pp. 10, 37; Richard Whatcoat, *Journal*, in W. W. Sweet, "The Methodists," *op, cit.*, p. 79; Francis Asbury, *The Journal of the Rev. Francis Asbury*, I (New York, 1821), p. 375.

have been the first public invitation of this type was given at a little Methodist Church in Maryland in 1798. In his Journal under the date of October 31 of that year, Jesse Lee wrote:

> At Paup's meeting-house, Mr. Asbury preached on Ephesians v. 25, 26, 27. He gave us a good discourse. Then I exhorted, and the power of the Lord was amongst us; many wept, and some cried aloud with deep distress. Then Miles Harper exhorted, and dismissed the assembly. The class was desired to remain. Brother Neal, who was present, began to sing, and in a little while many were afflicted, and a general weeping began. John Easter proclaimed aloud, "I have not a doubt in my soul but what my God will convert a soul today!" The preacher then requested all that were under conviction to come together. Several men and women came, and fell upon their knees; and the preachers, for some time, kept singing, and exhorting the mourners to expect a blessing from the Lord, till the cries of the mourners became truly awful. Then prayer was made in behalf of the mourners, and two or three found peace. My soul did magnify the Lord, and rejoice in God my Saviour."[9]

This idea of urging convicted persons to gather in a designated place while a minister exhorted and others sang represented a significant development in the order of worship. For purposes of distinction, it can be said to mark the actual beginning of the contemporary "altar call" procedure.

The practice of coming forward voluntarily as an evidence of intention also began to be an accepted pattern about this same time. George Kinard wrote Bishop Asbury on June 20, 1800: "On the sabbath after you left here (Duck Creek, Delaware), about one hundred and nine came forward, and begged to be admitted to our society."[10] John Brodhead reported that "eighty-three came forward and joined the society" after he spoke in the open air to a large congregation at Athens, Connecticut, on May 18, 1801.[11] At a love-feast out under the shade of trees near a church in Delaware on May 24, 1801, Reverend William Colbert sang and prayed after the sermon and then "called upon the persons in distress to come forward

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[9]Jesse Lee, *Journal*, in Minton Thrift, *Memoir of the Rev. Jesse Lee with Extracts from his Journals* (New York, 1823), p. 243.

[10]George Kinard, Letter in *Extracts of Letters*, p. 3, quoted in Wade C. Barclay, *History of Methodist Missions*, Part I, *Early American Methodism, 1769-1844*, II (New York, 1950), p. 323.

[11]*Ibid.*

and look to the Lord to convert their souls." In response to his invitation, "numbers came forward, and repaired to the meeting-house" where he "spent some time with them in prayer" before he left them. Here was an early instance of the principle of the inquiry room being used. Again on April 18, 1802, at a crowded meeting-house Mr. Colbert said "a great number of mourners came to us in prayer when the invitation was given."[12] Similarly, Methodist circuit rider Henry Smith recorded in his diary on Sunday, May 29, 1803:

> After I had spoken to the class I opened a door to receive members into the society. None seemed disposed to join. I then proposed for those who were mourning to know the love of God if they would come forward and kneel down. Eight or ten came.[13]

Here the invitation clearly asked persons in earnest about their salvation to demonstrate their desire by coming to the front of the sanctuary in full view of the congregation.

The plan of inviting seekers to a "mourners bench" or "anxious seat" seems to have developed in connection with this appeal to come forward. It derived its name from the bench which would be placed in front of the congregation or the front seats of the church which would be vacated to serve as a crude altar where penitent sinners might come to make their supplications to God. Henry Boehm, venerated pioneer Methodist preacher, witnessed the use of this technique in the early part of the year 1800 during a great revival at Cecil Circuit, Maryland, where William P. Chandler "was the preacher in charge." Commenting upon the effectiveness of this new method of gathering souls, he said:

> It was a great advantage because, with the seekers scattered all through the congregation, it was difficult to give them suitable attention. By bringing them together they were accessible to those who desired to instruct and encourage them. In the early part of the revival I saw twelve men kneel at the mourner's bench, and they were all quickly converted.[14]

As revival procedure became more standardized, the method of directing people to the mourner's bench also became more systematic. At a camp meeting on the Baltimore circuit in 1806 an "official guard" was appointed "to bring forward mourners and admit them" into an enclosure well supplied with

[12]William Colbert, *Journal*, quoted in John Atkinson, *Centennial History of American Methodism* (New York, 1884), footnote, p. 468.

[13]Henry Smith, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 469.

[14]Henry Boehm, statement made orally to John Atkinson, and recorded in *Ibid.*, p. 469.

benches, "where active persons were ready to receive them and help them on to Jesus."[15] These eye witness reports refute the commonly accepted belief that the mourner's bench was devised during the winter of 1807 in a crowded New York City Chapel "to enable saints to deal with seekers more conveniently,"[16] although the evidence supporting this opinion shows how the idea of the mourner's bench was spreading. The same could be said for the theory that this custom originated later in the backwoods camp meetings of America.[17] The idea that "the anxious seat" was a "new measure" of Charles G. Finney, asserted in the 1820's and 1830's by such prominent men as Asahel Nettleton and Lyman Beecher, if not Finney himself,[18] while having no basis in fact, nevertheless shows how the method was being adopted in the church, especially in the revivalistic wing.

Instead of the "mourner's bench," sometimes distressed persons would be invited to come to the communion rail for prayer from which was derived the association of "the altar call."[19] This was particularly applicable to those churches which had an altar constructed at the front of the sanctuary where communicants could receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. One of the first persons to extend such an invitation was Reverend Richard Sneath at the old St. George's Methodist Church in Philadelphia on January 25, 1801. In a letter to Dr. Coke, Mr. Sneath recounted this experience:

> After Mr. Cooper had done preaching, I invited all the mourners to come to the communion table, that we might pray particularly for them. This I found to be useful, as it removed that shame which often hinders fouls from coming to Chrift, and excited them to the exercife of faith. About thirty profeffed to be

[15]Henry Smith, November 11, 1806, quoted in W. W. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1763-1840* (New York, 1952), p. 151.

[16]Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (New York, 1957), p. 46; citing the earlier research of Frank Granville Beardsley, *A History of American Revivals* (New York, 1904), pp. 194-195.

[17]View held by Paul Samuel Sanders, *An Appraisal of John Wesley's Sacramentalism in the Evolution of Early American Methodism* (Unpublished Th. D. Thesis, Union Theological Seminary, 1954), p. 389. Dr. Sanders refers to the description by Captain Marryat of a Methodist Camp Meeting in 1812 to illustrate his point, in Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, *The Story of Methodism* (New York, 1946), p. 253 f.

[18]Charles G. Finney, *Memoirs* (New York, 1876), p. 288 f; see W. W. Sweet, *Revivalism in America* (New York, 1945), pp. 135, 136; cf. incorrect interpretation of this reference by P. S. Sanders, who thought that Sweet credited the origin of the mourner's bench to Finney, Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 358.

[19]A plausible theory suggested by Dr. Sanders although his chronology of origin is inadequate. Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 357

converted, and twenty-fix joined the society.[20]

The "altar call" soon became a common observance in the church, and among the Methodists, at least, it became virtually a universal practice.

It is not difficult to see why the appeal to come to the altar gained such popular favor. The Holy Sacrament had always been reverently regarded by most Americans and this feeling was nowhere more localized than at the altar. Thus, for those who already held the altar sacred, the invitation for sinners to come there for solace had almost a sacramental appeal.[21] Surely it presented an ideal setting for evangelism. Instances of sacramental occasions being turned into revivals are numerous in American history. A routine example of this was reported by Bishop Whatcoat in his Journal for November 8, 1789. He wrote that "the power of God came down" mightily during the administration of the Sacrament at a Quarterly Conference, causing an interruption in the communion service, and later after Bishop Asbury preached, people "began to praise the Lord and call upon His Name." He expressed the hope that many would date their conversion from that meeting.[22] Interestingly enough, the first camp meetings in the west grew out of revivals which burst out at services of the church where the Lord's Supper was administered. The most famous of them all, the Cane Ridge meeting in Kentucky, which attracted perhaps 25,000 persons to Bourbon County in 1801, began as an annual Presbyterian Communion service, and ended with Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians united in worship, and the latter two in Communion.[23] In these camp meetings, the table where the "elements" were served, and even the rail or fence which separated it from other furnishings of the ground, was to the backwoodsmen of the frontier truly a place where penitent souls might come to find forgiveness and help in time of need.

All of the basic ingredients in the modern-day "altar call" are seen in these evangelistic techniques developed in the great revivals of the early nineteenth century. In the past one hundred and fifty years the appeal has become somewhat more

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[20]Richard Sneath, Letter to Dr. Coke, Oct. 5, 1802, printed in *The Methodist Magazine*, 1803, XXVI, p. 373. Note that the "s" is here written as "f."

[21]Dr. Sanders in his extensive study of sacramentalism in the evolution of early American Methodism concluded that "the early Methodists saw the same psychological value of a penitent seeker coming to the 'altar' for help that Wesley saw in a 'seeker making the motion of rising, moving forward, kneeling down, and taking hold of and eating bread and wine,'" Sanders, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

[22]Richard Whatcoat, *Journal*, in W. W. Sweet, "The Methodists," *op. cit.*, pp. 84, 85.

[23]See P. S. Sanders, *op. cit.*, pp. 352, 353; Thomas Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 46; cf. C. C. Cleveland, *op. cit.*, 62 ff., 76 ff.

polished and a few more promotional ideas such as lifting the hand or signing a card, but the essential pattern of giving the public invitation remains unaltered. Not only has "the altar call" now become virtually an indispensable procedure of the professional evangelist, but "The Invitation to Christian Discipleship" has become an accepted order of worship in practically all Protestant churches, particularly non-liturgical communions. It is true that in the last half-century within the growing liturgical movement of America there has been a definite refinement of this concept, and among some of the more sophisticated divines, a gradual elimination of it. Ultimately from this movement perhaps a new and even more indigenous invitation will emerge. But, like it or no, until there can be found an evangelistic method more suited to the temperament and aspirations of the American people, "the altar call" of the distinctively revivalistic origin and flavor is likely to remain a vital part of evangelical worship.

The Bridge of Prayer

Paul S. Rees

Somewhere I have read a simple little prayer-poem that takes this great truth of the text and flings it out in a figure for the imagination to seize. It is attributed to Gilbert Thomas and called "The Unseen Bridge":

There is a bridge, whereof the span
Is rooted in the heart of man,
And reaches, without pile or rod,
Unto the Great White Throne of God.
Its traffic is in human sighs
Fervently wafted to the skies;
'Tis the one pathway from despair;
And it is called the Bridge of Prayer.

A bridge, come to think of it, is a thing quite wonderful. It may be a crude affair, made of wire and thin boards, swinging its one-way pedestrian traffic across a stream in the southern mountains. Or it may be a majestic structure of concrete and steel, carrying hundreds of vehicles and scores of trains every hour across a San Francisco Bay. In either case it is a combination of romance and utility fit to set one's blood atingling.

Some years ago death came to Sir William Arrol, an Englishman who was famous as "the prince of bridge-builders." When the news reached Tasmania, half way round the world, it set fire to the fancy of that charming preacher and essayist, F. W. Boreham. He sat down and wrote an essay which he called "The Building of the Bridge." Commenting on the career of Arrol, he remarks: "Since reading the tale of his audacious undertakings and bewildering achievements, it has dawned upon me that bridge-building is the only profession worth while. It is a lovely thing to see life's deep ravings--its raging torrents, its yawning abysses, its perilous chasms--and to fling across them bridges by which a little child can cross in safety." And he adds, "When I come to think of it, it really seems to me that we are sent into this world of ours for no other purpose than to build bridges."

Well, surely one of the bridges which every man should build in his own life--and will build if Christ is his Savior and Lord--is the bridge of Prayer. What a span it is--leading from the heart of man to the heart of God and from the heart of

man to the hearts of his fellow men! And what traffic passes over it--not only the "human sighs" that our poem talks about, but the manifold longings, hopes, fears, supplications, and thanksgivings, that are endlessly woven into the life of the praying man or woman!

I.

The bridge of Prayer! Let's try to trace out, first of all, the suggestiveness of this figure of speech.

For one thing, it is understood, even by a child, that bridges do not just happen: they have to be built. I first visited San Rafael on the north. Then, fifteen years ago, they began building towers and winding cables for a suspension span across those treacherous waters. When the Golden Gate Bridge was finished, it had a main span running 4200 feet without a support and clearing the water at a height of 220 feet, which is the equivalent of a twenty story building. But into that stupendous achievement went incalculable pains and patience. Into it went $35,000,000. Into it went five years of labor.

So it is with prayer. As Moffatt translates our text, it reads: "The prayers of the righteous have a powerful effect." True, but no man discovers over night just how wonderful or how various and far-reaching is the ministry of prayer. That is something he learns. When the disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray," they were given an answer that took the form of what we call "The Lord's Prayer." But that did not mean that they had mastered the art of praying. In fact, the sixty-six words of that peerless prayer contains insights and challenges and possibilities which a whole lifetime of praying will not exhaust.

Hudson Taylor, mighty man of prayer, was once asked if he ever prayed without conscious joy. "Often," he replied. "Sometimes I pray on with my heart feeling like wood." Then he added, "Often, too, the most wonderful answers have come when prayer has been a real effort of faith, without any joy whatever." But, mind you, Hudson Taylor could not have given you that answer at the close of the first day of his Christian life. He learned it in the rugged school of experience. All his days he was building the bridge of prayer.

Exploring further the suggestiveness of this figure of prayer as a bridge, let's observe that, normally, a bridge is made for two-way traffic. So, in truth, is prayer. In one direction the movement of prayer is from our heart to God. It is a movement of confession, of petition, of intercession, of longing, of eagerness and of faith. One fears that sometimes this is the only traffic lane that some people see or use on the

bridge of prayer. Actually, of course, the other lane is from one point of view more important. There the direction in which the traffic moves is from God's heart to ours. It is a movement of wooing, of guidance, of love revealed, and grace imparted, and strength renewed. One is the active, talking, requesting side of prayer, the other is the responsive, listening, receiving side.

II.

Having looked at the suggestiveness of the poet's figure let me turn now to a discussion of the serviceableness of prayer. I should like to take our text, together with its setting, and let it cast its light on the larger meanings which we may thus find in the figure.

Consider, for one thing, how prayer is a bridge over our emotional difficulties. Step back to chapter 4 and feel the sting of the questions James puts to some of these members of the Christian community in the first century.

As we have it in "Moffatt," the apostle asks: "Where do conflicts, where do wrangles come from, in your midst? Is it not from these passions of yours that war among your members?" Then comes the rebuke: "You crave and miss what you want: you envy and covet, but you cannot acquire: you wrangle and fight." Then comes the implied cure for this miserable state of things: "You miss what you want because you do not ask God for it" (James 4:1-3).

A judge who handled, for the most part, cases of domestic trouble is reported to have said that the greatest cause of divorce is "emotional adolescence." The phrase describes people who never grew up emotionally, never got beyond the juvenile stage of "I-want-what-I-want-when-I-want-it." They never learned the higher satisfaction of surrendering to something or someone beyond themselves. If they would take Jesus Christ seriously, if they would go to praying wholeheartedly, the snarled and tangled condition within themselves would be straightened out. "You miss what you want because you do not ask God for it," says James. This does not mean that prayer is a magical way to gratify your selfish desires. Upon the contrary, it means that prayer will shift you over to a new focus in your desires: now you will want what God wants more than you wanted what self was after. And these redeemed desires God will fulfill. Then, instead of your having a civil war on the battle field of your personal emotions, there will be peace.

Again, think how prayer becomes a bridge over our physical

ills. Three verses removed from our text James says: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up" (James 5: 13-15).

I think there are two kinds of people who need help in interpreting this aspect of prayer--the skeptically minded and the spiritually minded. The skeptically minded toss it off as a piece of nonesense. All the healing that they know anything about is what nature provides and what doctors and medicines may be able to add to nature's provision. Such people should be told, quite bluntly, that they could stand a little more intelligentce and a little more sincerity. Listen to Alexis Carrel, the distinguished physician and philosopher: "As a physician, I have seen men, after all other therapy had failed, lifted out of disease and melancholy by the serene effort of prayer. It is the only power in the world that seems to overcome the so-called 'laws of nature'; the occasions on which prayer has done this have been termed 'miracles.'"

On the other hand, many spiritually minded people need help as they seek to gather from these words of the Apostle James all the fine values that there are. What are some of these values?

1) It is always proper to pray about our physical ills and weaknesses: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray." The simplicity of our faith and the implications of our relationship to God as children to their father, should lead us to turn, with complete naturalness, to our Heavenly Guardian when illness settles upon us.

2) If special intercession is desired in behalf of the sick one, it is his responsibility to make his condition known to the spiritual leaders of the church: "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him." They are not instructed to call for the sick, but the sick are encouraged to call for them.

3) Whether the anointing "with oil" is medicinal, as some believe, or symbolic of the Holy Spirit, as others hold, it is that he will be raised up by a special ministry of the healing Spirit of God. In my view, that "prayer of faith" is a particular gift from God which anyone may experience on occasions and which some have had more or less continuously.

Not all are healed this way. Frankly, not many are healed this way. Why? Partly because we do not follow James' in-

structions! But only partly! The other reason, I am convinced, is that God has other ways of healing people. He does heal through surgeons, physicians, and nurses; He does heal through mental suggestion; He does heal through climate; He does heal through spiritual adjustment and purification; He does heal through the natural recuperative powers which He has given to the human body. And in all of these processes and ministries prayer is a vital factor: it is a bridge to health. A friend of mine, whose career was almost ended at the very beginning of it, testifies: "I do not believe in healing by the direct touch of the Spirit of God--I know it. For I was suddenly touched in a dark moment, and from that time I've known health and life."

Consider, finally, how prayer is a bridge over our spiritual problems. Think of the spiritual troubles where the root lies in our own hearts: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" (James 5:16). Here the healing, presumably, is of the heart rather than of the body. Observe sharply that it results not from placing blame on someone else, but taking blame upon oneself. "Confess your faults!" You say you can't? Then pray until you can--and do!

"I have a house inside of me,
A house that people never see.
It has a door through which none pass,
And windows, but they're not of glass.

"I meet my heavenly Father there,
For He stoops down to hear my prayer,
To heal my wounds and cure my care,
And make me strong to do and dare.

"Then after I am made quite strong,
And things are right that were all
wrong,
I go outside where I belong,
And sing a new and happy song.

"You have a house inside of you,
Where you can fight your battles
through,
And God will tell you what to do,
And make your heart both strong and
true."

Those lines, which appeared anonymously on a church bulletin sent from China, hit home to every man who wants to use the bridge of prayer leading over to spiritual health.

And then think of the spiritual failures and disasters and needs where the cause lies in the evil or indifferent hearts of other people. They are people who need Jesus Christ, but they have not as yet begun to seek Him. They are people you want to reach with the transforming message of the Gospel, but they seem always to elude your touch. Never forget that prayer is a bridge to their hearts. Keep building, come what may. Keep driving the wedge of prayer into the wayward soul. And as you do, take this as your divine encouragement: "Let him know (the praying Christian) that he which converteth (by the power of prayer) the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (v. 20).

Dr. P. W. Philpott, beloved servant of God, was converted at eighteen. Immediately he set about to lead his little Scotch mother to Christ. He succeeded in short order. Then he tackled a schoolmate of his. No success at all! There began a ministry of intercessory prayer for that friend that was due to last for more than half a century. After fifty six years had gone by, Dr. Philpott was preaching in a tabernacle in Detroit. One day he learned that his boyhood friend had attended one of his services, but that he was now a confirmed member of a certain cult and not at all approachable about his relation to Christ. Philpott prayed on. A year and a half later he received a letter from his friend. It read in part: "Philpott, I have never forgotten those days back in Dresden (Ontario) when you tried to lead me to Christ. Since I saw you in Detroit I have entirely given up spiritism. More than that, I have received Christ as my Savior."

A few days later Dr. Philpott received a letter from the man's wife telling him that her husband dropped dead in the barn on his farm near Port Huron. Whatever other influences were at work on that man's life across the long years, certainly prayer was one of them--building a bridge to his lonely, hungry heart over which, at last, Jesus Christ could move in and save him.

The bridge of prayer! Are you keeping yours in good condition!

Spiritual Classics of the Soul

William Arnett

Many centuries ago a wise man declared that "of making of books there is no end" (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Among the vast number of books, however, relatively few have had a widespread influence from generation to generation. In the area of spiritual discipline there are a few classics whose acknowledged excellence have stood the test of the centuries and until our day have been a perennial source of inspiration to multitudes of people. Unquestionably their excellence is derived from the fact that they deal with the highest concern of man--the intimate dealings of God with the human soul. These spiritual classics of the soul have directed questing men and women to the very heart of things, and have been a priceless boon in their search for the highest.

Foremost of all, of course, is the Bible which is justly called "the Book of books." It is impossible to exaggerate the Bible's influence upon the lives of men. Through many generations and across numerous lands, its message has brought light and hope, inspiration and challenge, rebuke and correction, and above all, a Saviour and salvation, to vast multitudes. It has given spiritual sustenance to Christian believers, who like Job (23:12) have esteemed God's word more than their necessary food, and have shared the testimony of Jeremiah (12:16): "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart." Unfortunately, American "activism" and regular times of meditation and devotion with the Word of God do not readily blend. But for those who conscientiously give the Bible top priority, and who regularly and methodically read and study it, there is a perennial source of grace and power that keeps the soul in a satisfying communion with God.

Though the Bible stands by itself in its power to bless and instruct men spiritually, other spiritual classics have proven themselves as sources that bring spiritual enlightenment and understanding to the mind, as well as fires of yearning and aspiration to the soul. Undoubtedly the foremost among them is The Confessions of Saint Augustine. It is unquestionably one of the greatest of human writings, and certainly one of the most influential. Luther regarded the Bible and the Confessions above all other books. Two main emphases stand out in this

classic: God the Seeker, and Man the Sinner. At the very beginning is what might be considered the golden-text of the Confessions that is known to many who are unacquainted with anything else Augustine has written: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee." In the soul's deep quest God was Seeker in the thought of Augustine, and to this fact he makes repeated reference. His meeting with Ambrose which led to his conversion is evidence of God's initiative. "All unknowing I was brought by God to him, that knowing I should be brought by him to God" (V,13). Again he writes: "Thou didst seek us when we sought not Thee, didst seek us indeed that we might seek Thee" (XI,2). Man is the rebellious one who resists the seeking love of God. It was so with Augustine. A deep sense of sin and unworthiness permeates the Confessions, a fact inseparable from Augustine's earlier profligacy and licentiousness, the utter domination of the flesh. But God's grace and love overcame his rebellion, and Augustine became numbered among twice-born men. Often he breaks into exclamations of wonder, praise and gratitude in view of God's mercy and goodness. In spite of passages that are difficult to understand, the Confessions have enabled multitudes of ordinary men and women, employing the words of Augustine, to pour out their own hearts in prayer and praise, contrition and confession, thanksgiving and adoration. In laying bare his own soul before God, he has enabled others to better understand themselves as well as the ways of God with man, and at the same time provided challenge and encouragement to seek deeper levels of spiritual life and experience.

One of the most widely read of the devotional classics is Thomas a Kempis' The Imitation of Christ. It was written in the fourteenth century by a religious recluse, and since then passed through more than three thousand editions. In the judgment of many critics it ranks next to the Bible as devotional literature. Though written primarily for men and women who wished to live apart from the world, either in semi-retirement or in the cloister, yet millions of lay people have been gripped by its appeal, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, Protestant or Catholic, evangelical or skeptic. "Man's real progress is in self-denial" is the keynote of the book, and from its pages there is sounded a clarion call to self-conquest, self-discipline, and a complete submission to the will of God. Even Matthew Arnold regarded The Imitation of Christ as "the most exquisite document after those of the New Testament of all that the Christian spirit has ever inspired." It is written in great

simplicity, and yet with a power to lift men above the world of things with its troubles, evils, pains and sorrows, and to bring them into felt communion with God. In an age when man is imperiled by a domination of the material, and Christian profession is marked by form and fashionableness, the austerity and challenge of The Imitation provides not only a rebuke to ease and comfortableness, but also a serious call to face squarely the high cost of genuine discipleship.

Still another spiritual classic is The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence, a lay brother in the monastery of the Discalced (barefooted) Carmelites in Paris where he worked in the kitchen for forty years as "a servant of the servants of God" until his death. The quality of his Christian life enabled him to clothe the most menial tasks with a sacramental significance. It was in the kitchen that Brother Lawrence learned to practice the presence of God, and he in turn imparted his method to others, thus enabling successive generations of Christians to live for God in the everyday walks of life--in the kitchen, office and factory. "It is not necessary for being with God to be always at church," he writes. "We may make an oratory of our heart, wherein to retire from time to time, to converse with Him in meekenss, humility, and love." Concerning the best method he advises: "You will tell me that I am always saying the same thing: it is true, for this is the best and easiest method I know; and as I use no other, I advise all the world to it. We must know before we can love. In order to know God, we must often think of Him; and when we come to love Him, we shall then also think of Him often, for our heart will be with our treasure." The set times of prayer for Brother Lawrence were not different from other times. Indeed, he discloses his secret in this personal testimony in the "Fourth Conversation" as follows: "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer, and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquillity, as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament."

No listing of the great spiritual classics would be complete without The Pilgrims's Progress by John Bunyan. It has been more widely read than any book but the Bible. Bunyan wrote it while imprisoned at Bedford. It passed through ten editions before Bunyan's death. His earlier experience as a soldier in the Parliamentary army provided him with many of the figures found in the book. Actually, for all their allegorical names, the characters are real people--men and women in various

walks of life. And what an array of characters! Appropriate names, often amusing, but representing flesh and blood, move across the pages of this greatest of allegories. For example: Mr. Talkative, Lord Carnal Delight, Mr. By-ends, Lord Time-server, Mr. Facing-both-ways, and Mr. Two-tongues, the parson of the parish. Look at the names of those vivid personalities who comprised the jury at Vanity Fair: Mr. Blindman, Mr. No-good, Mr. Malice, Mr. Love-lust, Mr. Live-loose, Mr. Heady, Mr. High-mind, Mr. Enmity, Mr. Liar, Mr. Hate-light, Mr. Cruelty and Mr. Implacable. In Part Two are those admirable characters, Great Heart and Valiant-for-Truth. One cannot forget the description of the picture of a preacher that Christian was shown in the house of the Interpreter, as the pilgrim set out on his journey for the Celestial City: "It had eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in its hand, the law of truth was written upon its lips, the world was behind its back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over its head." This book, one of the greatest in Christian literature, has followed the Bible to every land. Its influence and inspiration are immeasurable.

Other devotional classics could be mentioned that have had a wide reading, though not equally appealing to every reader. For instance, there is William Law's A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, which had such influence in John Wesley's early life, and The Private Devotions of Lancelot Andrewes. The journals of George Fox, John Wesley, and John Woolman have provided both information and inspiration to many.

Our list would not be complete without calling attention to John Wesley's Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament.

The Notes, as they are often called, and the Standard Sermons were the doctrinal standards prescribed by Wesley for the Methodist Preaching Houses. Though often neglected in the past, the Notes are coming more and more into their own again. The volume includes Wesley's own translation of the New Testament and his brief commentary and annotations on the text. Many are finding this work by Wesley to be spiritually refreshing. He wrote the Notes primarily for the common man, and usually they are concentrated, practical theology written in an extremely concise form. Both clergymen and laymen are discovering their spiritual value, and concur with the opinion of Adam Clarke: "Always judicious, accurate, spiritual, terse, and impressive; and possess the happy and rare property of leading the reader immediately to God and his own heart." Utilizing Bengel's Gnomon Novi Testamenti,

which he esteemed so highly, Wesley sought through his brief comments and spiritual guidance to bind men to the Word of God. There are many treasures throughout the Notes that are both illuminating and inspiring. For example, in his comment on II Corinthians 3:18, Wesley writes: "Moses saw the glory of the Lord, and it rendered his face so bright, that he covered it with a veil; Israel not being able to bear the reflected light. We behold His glory in the glass of His word, and our faces shine too; yet we veil them not, but diffuse the lustre which is continually increasing, as we fix the eye of our mind more and more steadfastly on His glory displayed in the gospel." There is a gem in his comment on John 6:44 ("No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day"): "No man can believe in Christ, unless God give him power. He draws us first by good desires, not by compulsion, not by laying the will under any necessity; but by the strong and sweet, yet still resistible, motions of His heavenly grace." There is spiritual depth, insight and counsel in this comment on Revelation 5:4 ("And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon"): "The Revelation was not written without tears; neither without tears will it be understood."

Wesley's Letters likewise have devotional value. The John Telford edition in eight volumes has a total of 2,670 letters, dealing with a wide range of human interest--spiritual, physical, moral, mental, political and economic. As Telford observes in the "Introduction," "The devotional and spiritual significance of the Letters grows upon us as we read them." Wesley's able employment of, and keen insight into, the Scriptures, as well as his common sense and expert guidance in the affairs of life, make his Letters a wellspring of spiritual blessing.

In our own time there are devotional books that give promise of becoming spiritual classics not only because of the manner in which they are meeting spiritual needs, but also their wide circulation which indicates their hold on a new generation of believers. Mrs. Charles E. Cowman's Streams in the Desert is one of these. There has been a constant demand also for A Diary of Private Prayer by John Baillie since it first appeared in 1936.

There is an element of timelessness in these various devotional classics. It is because these men of God learned the secret of communion with God. It is a soul-enriching experience to read and digest their thought. In our time there is need of a vital synthesis between the spiritual values which belong

to the lives of the saints and practical mystics whose lives centered in God, and the genius for activity and practicality in the work of the Lord. The holding of correct doctrine, for all of its importance, is not sufficient. There must be living communion with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. Only in this way will we behold the glory of the Lord in daily life and grow in Christlikeness.

Men of Devotion

Charles V. Fairbairn

In the closing words to his son in the gospel, "The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," the Apostle Paul portrays a devotion to his God and his calling such as can only be sustained by a life of prayer and devotion; and in his exhortation to Timothy he urges him to a similar life of completest consecration: "Watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." And to us his call comes ringing across the years, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable (some prefer 'spiritual') service."

The word devotion as used in the above caption has a much broader connotation than we ordinarily allow. It is a noun derived from the verb devote, from which also comes the adjective devoted. Its synonyms are: allegiance, fealty, fidelity, loyalty, piety. It may mean ardent affection, zealous attachment, religious fervor, an act evincing devotedness, and acts of worship, prayers and supplications. In the Old Testament the word devoted may mean either consecrated or doomed. A lamb might be consecrated to God, a city devoted to destruction. In either case the thing concerned was turned over for a purpose. The man of God, if a true man of God, is a devoted man, one who by act of his own will and by acceptance of God is completely "turned over," spirit and soul and body, to God for a divine purpose. He is devoted to God and therefore ought to be also devoted to the service of God. However we have a fear that one may be devoted to service for the sake of enjoying the activity and yet not be devoted heart and soul to the very God for and to whom the service is supposed to be rendered. A woman once confessed to me a heart-deep bitterness against her father for some injustice done her in childhood. In her middle years, her last sister married and left home which necessitated her giving up her profession as a trained nurse and going home to take care of her father. She told me that neither brother nor sister could find fault with her faithful performance of duty and her care of the old gentleman. "But," said she, "while I do that for him, down in my heart I hate him yet. How can I get rid of this terrible feeling?" The rest of

the family and the neighbors saw her as a woman who had made a great surrender and was devotedly taking care of her father; but she knew that while devoted to this service, down in her heart she was not devoted to the object of her care.

There is a devotion to God which, while on a much higher plane than that of sweetheart and lover, can be somewhat better understood when terms of the latter relationship are considered. There is a constant desire for nearness each to the other, a mutual self-surrender, a mutual trust and faith, and these projected over into the married relationship combine to become a continual life-long adjustment of mind and purpose and life. All of these characterize the minister as a man of devotion. The desire for nearness becomes a Christian's delight in fellowship and communion with El Shaddai, the All-sufficient One. Devotion so considered means loyalty and fidelity, even though the loved one may be miles away. Such a devotion will offer the beloved a service which, though it may involve self-denial, will be unbegrudged and unstinted--a love service. Such devotion is not content to express itself in cold mechanical acts, its heart is in everything that is offered or done. It amounts to love, admiration, adoration and worship, and declares, "I delight to do Thy will, O God!"

The minister to be what he ought to be must be God's own, peculiarly God's own, uniquely His very own. Satan has no chains, no straps, nor even strings upon him, and the world holds no mortgage against God's property. God has called him out of the world; he has responded with all his heart. He is by his own will, as well as by the act of God, set apart from the serfdom of sin and, of course, was long ago delivered from slavery to the devil; he is God's very own human property--utterly devoted to God.

When it comes to devotion as it relates to prayers, supplications, worship, both in general and in particular, there are other thoughts which must be brought in here.

Worship relates to wonder. When we cease to wonder we cease to worship. Wonder may be defined as: feeling of awe, something of curiosity, something of near-disbelief (but not necessarily doubt). Feeling of awe--Thomas cries out, "My Lord and my God!" Something of curiosity--"And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." Something of near-disbelief (but not necessarily doubt) -- "And Elisabeth spake out with a loud voice, and said, Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And as the joy of salvation comes flooding into a spiritually new-born soul, he cries out, "Oh, what is this

which has happened to me?" Wonder--curiosity, plus research and you have science. Wonder--almost near-disbelief, plus natural philosophy and you have doubt, modernism, atheism. Wonder--awe, plus faith and you have worship. I may not understand a great many things, but I can believe; I can trust; I do have confidence; and I enjoy benefits divine.

"I know not how this saving faith
To me He did impart,
Nor how believing in His Word
Wrought peace within my heart.

"But I know whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able,
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day."

When a man thinks he has all the answers, he ceases to worship; he may go through stated forms to satisfy his own conscience or to meet the expectation of others, but he has ceased to worship in his heart. And when a man is satisfied with small answers to great problems volunteered by little men he also ceases to worship. But the man of God, the man of devotion, the man of wonder and awe and faith will be content, content to stand with Moses and say, "The secret things belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the works of the law."

THERE IS THE WONDER OF INSPIRATION. To think that God should speak unto man! I was a lost soul heading for a devil's hell, a soul unable to stop in its mad career, a soul which knew not its way out and up, and could not save itself. Then God spoke. He did not have to; but He did. He showed me the way out, told me what to do, pointed the way of salvation and made His divine help available to lift me, saved me, and set me going toward Heaven. And He promised to see me all the way through. "Wonder of wonders that He should love me!" I stand in awe, but I accept His word: the promise which holds; and His love saves me according to the promise. And lo, the Word which amazes me is still "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" all the way through. The wonder of inspiration!

THERE IS THE WONDER OF FELLOWSHIP. "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "Upon us?" "That we?" Who are we anyhow? What did we spring from? Where did we come

from? And Paul, like John, takes up the note of wonder and praise: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it in the ignorance of unbelief. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." And now, to think I am "a worker together with Him!" And "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The wonder of such fellowship!

"Under His wings, under His wings,
Who from His love can sever?
Under His wings my soul shall abide,
Safely abide for ever!"

THEN THERE IS THE WONDER OF PRAYER AND ITS ANSWER. A mother in the east with a wayward son in the midwest experienced a terrific burden one night for his salvation. Making her way through the dark to the always-unlocked welcoming door of the little church, she entered and swiftly passed up the aisle to the familiar altar where her soul, hour after hour pressed its burden home to the sympathetic heart of her Lord Christ. Around eleven o'clock her faith touched through, the clouds cleared away and she knew that God had undertaken for the salvation of her son. In only a few days she received a letter from the lad in the midwest telling her that only a few nights before, under terrible conviction for sin, unable to find relief in either pool-hall or theater, he had gone to his room, fallen upon his knees, and around ten o'clock found peace with God. God's trains always come in on time. When her faith was touching through about eleven o'clock east of the time-line, her son was coming through to victory at ten o'clock west of the time-line. The wonder of prayer and its answer! An atheist sneeringly attacked Bishop Thoburn of India with the tirade: "Jesus alive! Jesus alive! How do you know Jesus is alive?" Very quietly and all unruffled, the Bishop answered: "Why, I was talking with Him this morning!"

Which leads us to THE WONDER OF INTERCESSION. Think

of the wonderful promise He has given: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, let him ask, and He shall give him life for them that sin not unto death." Power with God; power with men! Think of the Angel-word spoken to Jacob that night at Jabbok: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." It is always in that order; power with God precedes power with men. The wonder of intercession!

"And what shall I more say?" Time fails me to do other than point out by name a few shining examples of wonder and worship, of faith and devotion: John Wesley, John Knox, John Bunyan, David Brainerd, George Muller, Praying Hyde, E. M. Bounds, Andrew Murray, Hudson Taylor and a host of others. And then I think of a long line of lesser lights--or are they lesser? One time I wrote from South Dakota to my wife saying, "What these five weeks have done for the people here I do not know; but I do know that once more your husband has met a band of men and women who live deeply enough with God to make him hungry." I was thinking of the Schmidts, the Schuetzers, the Matsons, and the Gisselbecks; "there were giants in the earth in those days!" Oh, for the Holy Spirit to raise up another generation worthy of the accusation, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also!"

Lest I be misunderstood in this, I am adding it in a very modulated tone. Accruing to the Man of God who gives himself wholeheartedly to service to God in the vineyard and in secret to fellowship, communion, prayer and intercession, there are personal, spiritual, mental and even physical compensations. "The Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth. . .giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength. Even the youth shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (Isaiah 40:28-31). An involved wonder of the life of fellowship, of faith, prayer, and of Christlike intercession!

With apologies, let me put into the mouths of those yesteryears giants of wonder, faith and prevailing prayer lines from "In Flanders Fields" by Major John McCrae, Canadian Scottish Regiment, altered for the present purpose:

"We are the Dead.
Short days ago we lived,
Felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Rode saddle, walked and worked with God;
But now we lie,
Waiting the trumpet.

"Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The Gospel torch;
Be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us
Who before you worked and walked with God,
We shall not sleep so well
Waiting the trumpet."

A Guide for Prayer Cells

Robert E. Coleman

The prayer cell is being rediscovered today as one of the divinely ordained means of spiritual progress. Emphasizing especially the discipline of daily prayer for each member of the fellowship, these small Christian associations are multiplying around the world. The word "cell" has been applied to them as being indicative of the spontaneous nature of their origin and expansion. Some cells may concentrate upon a discipline other than prayer, such as Bible study or Christian service; but regardless of their particular interest, general aims are the same. Undoubtedly the resurgence of interest in this kind of communion is one of the great spiritual movements of our time.

The "cell" idea has been gaining momentum in the last twenty years. Led by such men as Samuel Shoemaker, Elton Trueblood, and others, it has been represented far and near. College students have been especially attracted to it, and thousands of cells have been formed on campuses across the country. One student group, inspired by the World Christian Conference in Oslo in 1948, organized "The Life Stream Foundation"; it publishes a small magazine to carry news of prayer groups around the world. A recent cell group conference for students at Ann Arbor, Michigan, attracted 234 representatives from 30 universities. Churches likewise have sensed the opportunity. In many local congregations, such as the notable Calvary Church (Episcopal) in New York City, cells have been organized throughout the parish. Now several of the larger denominations have adopted this policy as an official program of the church and are seeking to promote it on a national scale, the "Methodist Prayer Life Movement" headed by Thomas Carruth being the most aggressive example.

This movement is endowed with tremendous spiritual potential if it can escape the pitfalls of superficiality and irrelevance. Prayer cells can easily defeat their own purpose by becoming too ascetic or too self-sufficient. Moreover, there is the inherent tendency within small groups of this kind to become so subjective in analyzing their own problems that they lose

the sense of Christian responsibility. The call, for this reason, and particularly those specifically formed for prayer, must be thoroughly dedicated to Jesus Christ. It must be Christian in all its purpose or it should not exist. To maintain this principle, members of a prayer cell should be committed to the infallible authority of the Holy Scriptures and should express this faith in continuous Christian witness and service.

Among those motivated by a genuine Christian concern, who hunger for the intimate fellowship which the prayer cell provides, the real problem is not that they will misuse the ideal, but that they will not find it. Without any specific direction at this crucial point, many Christians are missing the privileges of a prayer cell because unaware of its potential. To meet this need of practical knowledge for busy people, as well as to stimulate interest in the creation of prayer cells on the Asbury campuses, A Prayer Cell Guide was recently published. It was not intended to be a rigid rule book, but only a guide to help interested persons get started in this discipline. In the shortest manner deemed expedient, it endeavors simply to answer some of the most elemental questions concerning the need and operation of a prayer cell.

(Copies of A Prayer Cell Guide may be secured from the Asbury Theological Seminary Book Store, Wilmore, Kentucky, at 10¢ each, or $7.00 per hundred copies.)

The Prayer Movement in Belgian Congo

Alexander J. Reid

In a study of every revival movement across the church we find the prominent place that prayer has taken in every instance. This may be illustrated from actual experiences in interior Africa.

We came to Africa nearly 28 years ago believing that the Christ who called us to Africa would answer prayer and send a spiritual awakening to this dark continent. We called together a group of our missionary friends and proposed that we make Friday a day of fasting and prayer until God gave us victory. Heathen customs of child marriage, polygamy, idol worship, moon worship, fetishes and charms everywhere, wicked funeral rites even to placing people alive in the grave with the departed humbled our hearts before God and caused us to cry in desperation of soul, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Has not the One who called us here promised us victory if we pray and trust Him? Through more than two years of fasting and prayer and traveling constantly in the villages of our district we held up Christ mighty to save unto the uttermost. Then by the hundreds they began reaching out after a new life but they could not grasp the meaning of it.

In deep agony of soul we decided to follow the plan Bishop Warne of India had followed--of calling our sixty-five preachers and their families together with such who might be interested to study the Book of Acts for ten days and to pray. The people themselves prepared a palm front tabernacle to protect them from the tropical sun, and made them little houses of the same materials. After two years of fasting and prayer and about three more days of Bible study and prayer, there swept over the multitude something of the same spirit that prevailed on the day of Pentecost, when the multitude were moved heavenward at one mighty movement which brought thousands of souls to the camp ground to find the same Christ the first praying multitude had found. They scattered the holy fire from village to village, witnessing scenes transcending words.

At one district meeting following this camp the preachers reported 2200 people had been won to Christ in ten months' time.

This movement spread from village to village for hundreds of miles throughout the tribe. Churches sprang up everywhere, built by converts to the new faith, until great persecution began from the Roman Catholic Church. Many witch doctors were gloriously won to Christ and became witnesses of their new-found faith.

For most of these intervening years we have been trying to keep up with this Peoples' Movement. The work developed so rapidly in the whole area for which the church was responsible to the North and West in the Lodja, Bena Dibele, Kataka Kombe, and Lomela territories, that the Wembo Nyama District had to be subdivided later into the Lodja District, then again the Katake Kombe District and now again the Lomela District. Lodja now has a splendid Missionary and African staff on their station and in the district, with hundreds of students in their schools and 125 preachers now recorded on their district, and with a host of local lay preachers in addition in the villages.

As at Lodja we have here at Katake Kombe another station with missionary and African staff, with homes, schools and dispensary and some fifty preachers preaching a glorious gospel out over the district, and hundreds of children in our schools. Two years ago it again became necessary to form Lomela district and now such an evangelistic opportunity is given us that it has been named by the General Conference as one of the four "Lands of Decision" for the next quadrennium. Already Lomela has a growing staff of workers and plans are being laid for rapid development. Practically all the present leaders of our Central Congo Conference have been won to Christ through this Peoples' Movement.

The World Prayer Movement

*From El Evangelista Cubana, Sept. 10, 1957.
(Trans. by S. A. Neblett)

A Christian is a person dedicated to the service of God. His earnest desire is the development of his spiritual life. Constant prayer is the indispensable factor, both in the spiritual development of the individual and the evangelization of the world. Every Christian should read the Gospels, riveting attention on the teachings of Jesus about prayer.

We are in an age in which the evangelical churches are giving more attention than ever to individual and united prayer. We recognize our commission to evangelize the world, and that if we are to obey the last command of Jesus, prayer is our major weapon.

In 1955, more than 1,300 churches in the United States formed prayer chains. Many pastors and churches succeeded in relating prayer vigils with the life of the local church, while others formed prayer cells or held devotional retreats.

El Aposento Alto (The Upper Room), reporting the action of the Methodist General Conference of 1956, said the following:

> The year 1957 has been designated by many groups as a favorable era in which to develop a World Prayer Movement. The first week of the year is the universal Week of Prayer. However, in 1957 millions of persons who have formerly not cooperated in a movement of this kind will join. It is the result of the spirit of fellowship which animates all Christians the world over who have faith in prayer to such an extent that they practice it.
>
> They pray for one another, for the Church, for world peace, for Christian brotherhood; they pray that they may become instruments in the extension of the kingdom of God.
>
> The kingdom of God is extended by means of the 'still small voice.' The Holy Spirit impels this progress. We must pray for the extension of the kingdom of God. Those who believe in prayer pray together. Our prayer is that all who pray to God be disposed to unite in this world

> movement.... Let us together consecrate ourselves to this task. Would that there might arise a predominant host of witnesses dedicated to prayer ascending to the throne of grace! God help us as we unite in prayer in 1957!

A department of the Methodist General Board of Evangelism has charge of the promotion of the fellowship of world prayer. Our churches in Cuba are on the eve of their months of evangelistic services. The pastors will have received a communication concerning the "Prayer Cell," a movement already initiated in 46 countries in churches on all the continents.

The prayer cell is indispensable, not only in the weeks before the revival services, but it should also be a permanent feature in each local church for the development of the spiritual life. A minister has given the following testimony:

> The presence of the Holy Spirit was manifested in the hours of waiting on God, in such great power that I have no adequate words with which to describe it. Lives were transformed, and we received blessings such as I have never experienced in my ministry.

May the ministers and members of the church in Cuba soon be able to give a similar testimony!

From these early fast prayer meetings and the continuation of camp meetings as a part of our evangelistic program for our conference, what rewards are we reaping at the present moment? Allow me to present the statement of Rev. Louis Johnson, District Superintendent of the Lodja and Lomela Districts, who with his African Superintendent, Rev. Moses Ngondjolo, projected this Peoples' Movement to Christ. A few days ago I received this letter from him:

> As the Mbulo la wedia Volambi (the term known and used throughout our tribe to describe the revival and what happened in the early years--comparative to the Cane Ridge meeting in Kentucky) and your continuing emphasis on camp meetings and revivals has produced fruit and helped bring a basis for the Katake Kombe blessings of the Holy Spirit in July, 1955, and the outpouring of His Spirit upon us at Lodja in August, 1955, and the continuing spreading revival until the church is living in a modern Pentecost.

As I write, word comes of expectation of at least three thousand people together in their weeks district conference

which is literally a continuation of Pentecost. Rev. Machlin reported... of the thousands coming and the great revival continuing to spread.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Louis Johnson to the Board of Missions of The Methodist Church which met January 15, 1957, at Buck Hill Falls:

> Since the beginning of the Peoples' Movement Christward in Lodja District beginning in August, 1955, and continuing to the present with vitality, 73 lay preachers have been added to our rolls. These men are totally self-supporting; the congregation builds their church and parsonage and pays all their salaries.
>
> Several thousands have been converted. The Movement is just beginning and going strong, spilling over one Chefferie boundary on to the next with many more calls coming in for revivals and preachers in new villages. It is evangelistic, calm, determined and powerful. Powerful moral and ethical changes are taking place in the lives of these people as they turn away from idols and fetishes and charms; from adultery, stealing, lying--sins of the flesh and sins of the disposition--to Christ.
>
> Last month, in a quarterly meeting of Preachers' Revival Visitation Evangelism campaign, the most wicked village in the territory was turned upside down in repentance and conversion. The state officials said that Weshi Ndjadi is the most rotten place in the territory. They said, 'Go win all of the people to Christ, we're for you, we've tried everything, nothing else will work.' It was truly a Peoples' Christward movement, with the chief and village elders and several hundred of the people looking to Jesus for forgiveness and the Christian life.
>
> Also, last month in a new village recently opened up by one of our lay preachers, a still larger movement took place. In one evening I saw over four hundred people at an altar of prayer in a grass brush arbor. They really were praying individual prayers as I listened to many, many of them as they prayed. We left before the meetings were closed, but the preachers report at this second place one of the largest movements yet.

So the Movement continues in part of our tribe. A personal

prayer request from Rev. Thomas Carruth, Secretary of the World Wide Movement for Prayer, asks us to join with them in this world-wide movement. Recognizing that still a large part of our country is not in this Peoples' Movement, and that the desperate needs of our times across the world calls for prayer, I asked our church this morning if they would join in this World Wide Prayer Movement. Nearly fifty people out of a before-daylight congregation of nearly two hundred came forward to the altar to indicate the fact that they would make 1957 a year of prayer.

*District Superintendent, The Methodist Church. Taken from "The World Wide Prayer Life Movement" and used by permission.

The Power is not Ours

Miguel Soto (Editor) in El Evangelista Cubano, Sept. 10, 1957.
(Trans. by S. A. Neblett)

If there is anything of which we are truly in need it is the power of a spiritual life, the product of prayer. We have sought that power in mass movements, in acts of missionary service, even in spiritual "retreats," but our lack of power continues to be notorious. We face the needs of the completely disoriented youth of a nation which interests itself solely in that plague of enterprises which offer gifts in exchange for anything; of a Christian generation which is beginning to forget that the Church was born after the first believers remained in Jerusalem to "wait for the promise...until you are clothed with power from on high."

The practicality of our days has caused us to abandon the habit of prayer as a prelude to any other action, but the weight of the daily burden makes us aware of the need of something which will lift our lives to a level of abundant security, free from unproductive vacillations.

Attracted by the spectacular or utilitarian we look upon the successes of Jesus as the product of his miracles rather than of his admirable prayer life. The latter was precisely the first thing which his disciples wished to learn upon discovering that his power was enclosed in it. Desiring to have much in exchange for a little, we forget that the essential thing is that God knows it, but our impatience has caused us to put God to one side, with the result that we go from one failure to another.

Now is the time for rectification. It is now in our hands to restore ourselves in the eyes of God, free of our unprofitable vanity. Now is the time to say: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears," convinced that God himself has been waiting for this moment of crisis, to hasten to respond to our call. If it were not so, prayer would not have been perpetuated as the only means of relating our souls directly to Him who gives power and life.

Book Reviews

Books reviewed in THE ASBURY SEMINARIAN may be ordered from the Seminary Bookstore, Wilmore, Kentucky.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, by Gleason L. Archer, Junior. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957. 108 pages. $1.50.

This volume by the professor of Biblical Languages, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, is presented by the publisher as the first in a series of "manuals which are to serve as guides for the study of the Bible" for seminaries, colleges and Bible schools. The book is essentially an analytical outline of the epistle, with accompanying exposition.

The outline of the book is excellent. It reveals a sure grasp of the message of this important treatise, and skill in relating the parts to the whole. The numerous hortatory portions of the letter are included in the main argument so as to make a smoothly unfolding sequence, smoother actually than the letter itself! The author correctly sees that the epistle is divided into two main parts: the superiority of the Mediator and the superiority of the New Covenant, with superiority being the unifying theme of the book. The outline thus serves the very useful purpose of revealing the inner structure of the epistle; it gives perspective, something often lost sight of in Bible study.

The exposition which accompanies and clarifies the outline is concise, incisive, and sound in both doctrine and exegesis. The most difficult chapter of the epistle (chapter two) is treated with considerable exegetical skill. Some may object that the author is too preoccupied with millenialism and with the theory of atonement known as the Federal theory, but it is difficult to find fault with his general grasp of the message of this great anonymous book. Professor Archer's close study of the Greek text is in evidence on every page.

The surprisingly short bibliography is explained by the purpose of the volume--which is, to serve not as a commentary but as a study manual. The brief introduction sets the problems of date, authorship, purpose, etc., in clear perspective.

On the whole, the volume serves its specific objectives admirably. It is not a substitute for a study of the Biblical text but a manual to accompany the study of the Bible itself. For the serious student of this important Bible book it should prove invaluable. It is good to know that we may expect other books

of this nature in "The Shield Bible Study Series." Anything which will promote a direct study of a Bible book should be warmly received. This volume meets a real need.

George A. Turner

Evangelism in a Changing America, by Jesse M. Bader, St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1957. 192 pages. $3.00.

Coming from one long associated with the National Council of Churches in America, the book is a very refreshing though less profound appeal for a dynamic evangelism for our day. The author sees evangelism as the first concern of the church, apart from which nothing else has any divine significance. To fulfil this primary concern, Dr. Bader calls upon the church to develop a soul-winning program geared to the twentieth century. His many suggestions as to how it can be done are sensible though lack of more detailed information in actual implementation of these plans limits the practical value of the book. Laymen may appreciate this non-technical purpose, but it is doubtful whether the busy pastor will find it more than stimulating of thought. However, if the book does nothing more than arouse a sleeping disciple to action, it deserves a reading and appreciation among churchmen.

Robert E. Coleman

Jonah—Fact or Fiction? by M. R. DeHaan. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1957. 168 pages. $2.50.

This is another very significant volume of Dr. DeHaan's radio messages. It could fittingly be entitled The Gospel in the Book of Jonah, for, while pursuing his study of Jonah, the author has succeeded in throwing light on many of the major concepts of Christianity--Substitutionary Sacrifice (Ch. 5), Christian Works (Ch. 8), Eternal Punishment (Ch. 10-13), and Atonement (Ch. 18). The messages have been given arresting titles which lure the reader on through the book.

DeHaan presents a typological study of the book of Jonah, relating the prophet to Jesus. To him the account of Jonah is

as literally true as the account of Jesus, and each must be believed as firmly as the other. "Faith in the literal account of Jonah is indispensable to salvation" (p. 74). He also attempts to make the characteristics of the type binding upon the antitype. "If Jonah is fiction, so is Christ" (p. 75). In doing this, he creates an interesting explanation of the "three days and nights" which are designated for Jonah's stay in the midst of the fish and Christ's stay in the tomb.

Jonah--Fact or Fiction? is an interesting book and will be a worthwhile addition to the reading experience of any preacher or layman. Dr. DeHaan's ability to find analogies and symbols has filled the book with fresh insights and new meanings. The reader will feel that suddenly the story of Jonah has new significance and greater worth as a part of the Bible. In addition, the messages have a deep practical purpose. Each one makes a close application to the hearts and needs of both the Christian and the uncoverted reader--close enought to bring real conviction.

Kenneth W. Burton

Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls, by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956. 144 pages. $2.50.

This is one of the better volumes on the famous scrolls from Qumran. It is less exhaustive than Burrow's volume, less biased than the writings of Dupont-Somer, and yet gives more than a repetition of earlier scholars. The fact that this introduction to the scrolls appeared relatively late has permitted a clearer perspective and hence is appropriately termed "second thoughts." The author is Professor of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield and is widely known as a careful, conservative New Testament scholar.

The volume recounts what is now generally known of the discovery of the scrolls in a concise and readable account. The community which produced the scrolls is described with accuracy and good judgment. The chapters dealing with the central ideas of the Qumran library and their relevance to Christianity are the best part of the book. The author shows wide acquaintance with the current literature on Qumran and handles the controverted subjects with precision and clarity. The similarities and contrasts between the Qumran expectations of the Messiah and those of Christianity are handled

with especial competence. The author concludes that the chief difference between the religion of the Qumran Essenes and the early Christians is Jesus Christ!

The person seeking a trustworthy account of the scrolls and of their significance for Christianity will find it in this volume.

George A. Turner

Devotions and Prayers of John Wesley, compiled and edited by Donald E. Demaray. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957. 109 pages. $1.50.

This pocket volume is one of a series of little devotional books published by Baker. Previously issued are brief collections of the prayers of Calvin and Luther. The aim of this treatise is "to offer the public helpful devotional material arranged to stimulate leisurely meditation."

Fifty-two devotional units, each comprising a meditation and a prayer, are selected from Wesley's writings; and the whole provides challenging spiritual and mental exercise for the reader. The compiler, an alumnus of Asbury Theological Seminary, is at present associate professor of religion at Seattle Pacific College.

James D. Robertson

The Dead Sea Scriptures, in English Translation, by Theodor H. Gaster. New York: Doubleday, 1956. 350 pages. $ .95.

If I were to buy but one book on the Qumran scrolls it would be this volume. It is a fresh and independent translation of the major scroll fragments published to date by a competent Hebraist. In addition to the translation is a terse and incisive introduction to the scrolls in general and to each individual one translated. Avoiding most of the extreme views expressed by the scholars, the translator sets the problems in proper perspective with a minimum of pleading for his point of view. Dr. Gaster, as professor at Columbia University and Dropsie College, was formerly chief of the Hebraic section of the Library of Congress. The time has come when the layman as

well as the scholar needs to read the documents for himself rather than merely read discussions about them. This opportunity comes as a result of the publication of this book, since more of the scrolls are translated in this volume than in any other volume thus far published.

George A. Turner

Contemporary Evangelical Thought, **edited by Carl F. H. Henry. Great Neck, New York: Channel Press, 1957. 320 pages.**

The growing number of scholarly productions from the pens of competent, evangelical scholars is an encouraging sign. The book under review is a worthy addition to the basic tools with which an earnest student can properly evaluate the present age.

This book is really an anthology. Major areas of theological and philosophical concern are analyzed and weighed in the balances of the Christian message. The trends and emphases of Old Testament scholarship are discussed by Edward J. Young of Westminster Theological Seminary. Major happenings in the New Testament field are covered by Everett F. Harrison of Fuller Theological Seminary. The professor of theology at Gordon Divinity School, Roger Nicole, comprehensively outlines the major contributions of evangelical scholars in both the Continent and the United States to the study of theology. Dirk Jellema of the Case Institute of Technology provides a survey of contemporary ethics. Apologetics is covered by Gordon H. Clark of Butler University, and education is evaluated by Frank E. Gaebelein, Headmaster of the Stony Brook School. A study of the various attempts to build a philosophy of history is presented by Earle E. Cairns of Wheaton College. Dr. Harold B. Kuhn of Asbury Theological Seminary has a comparable analysis of various philosophies of religion, and the editor, Carl F. H. Henry, seeks to discover the proper relationship which should exist between science and religion. The series closes with an essay on evangelism and preaching by Andrew W. Blackwood.

The contributors tend to agree concerning the following points:

1. Since the turn of the century evangelicals have definitely

been in the background of the intellectual scene, being effective only in evangelism and missions.

2. The liberalism of the early part of the twentieth century has run its course, and new movements such as neo-orthodoxy and existentialism are capturing attention.

3. Within western civilization there is now deep soul-searching and a renewed interest in religious matters. Evangelism is once more coming into the focus of attention.

4. There is a marked resurgence of evangelical scholarship. Important books are appearing in almost every field, written by competent conservative scholars. These are portents of more to come. Evangelicalism has a message and it ought to be proclaimed.

G. Herbert Livingston

The Amazing Dead Sea Scrolls and the Christian Faith, by William S. LaSor. Chicago: Moody Press, 1956. 251 pages. $3.50.

The Moody Press and Dr. William S. LaSor of Fuller Theological Seminary have done for American readers what is done elsewhere by F. F. Bruce in his Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Professor LaSor is well qualified for this important task. He is holder of two earned doctorates in biblical languages, and has spent two seasons in the Holy Land. This volume is the outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California. After reviewing the story of the discovery and identification of the scrolls he enters into a discussion of their significance for the Christian. Doctrines of the Qumran literature are examined carefully including the doctrines of God, salvation, the Law, the Messiah and eschatology. The light which the scrolls throw on contemporary Judaism and the early Christian church is set forth in the closing chapters of the volume. The author's careful scholarship is in evidence on every page and his insights are the more to be trusted because they reflect the combination of a scholar's exactness and an evangelical Christian's concern for the fundamentals of his faith.

George A. Turner

Revolution in Missions, edited by Blaise Levai. Madras, India: Christian Literature Society, 1957. 300 pages. $ .60.

Revolution in Missions is one of the most recent and most important books on the subject of missions to appear during the last few years. Edited by a missionary of the Church of South India, the book is a symposium on the subject of "The Role of Missions in Present Day India." It is a guide to encourage further study and discussion. No less than thirty-five different church leaders, both national and missionary, ministerial and lay, have contributed to the discussion of the subject. Their opinions and recommendations, presented in a very frank and sincere manner, contribute largely to the value of the book.

Though a variety of opinions are expressed, some of them in direct opposition to each other, certain fundamental conclusions are arrived at as a result of the discussion: (1) Missionaries will always be welcomed by the Indian Church, though in smaller numbers, to maintain its ecumenical outlook and contact with the Church of Christ throughout the world. (2) The Indian Church must be truly independent and free from any outside interference regarding policy or government. (3) Qualified Indian leaders should hold positions of responsibility. Wherever trained personnel is not yet available, immediate steps should be taken to provide the necessary study or training. (4) Missionaries from the West should come only at the invitation of the Indian Church as colleagues to share in the general life and work of the Church. (5) Since the Indian Church assumes its own responsibility, foreign help, including both finances and personnel, should be proportionately decreased.

The book has its weaknesses. One is its redundancy. Some phases of the subject are discussed over and over again. A more careful editing could have avoided this. Again, the value of the book, varying with a writer's ability to comprehend the issue under discussion, is disproportionate. Finally, there is the drawback of having the majority of the contributors from the south of India. A more representative selection of writers, including those from other parts of India and from other denominations, would have been wise.

But in spite of these defects the book should prove rewarding to those interested in the advance of the Church in India, and to all interested in the problems of present-day missions.

John T. Seamands

Life in the Spirit, by J. C. Macaulay. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955. 112 pages. $1.50.

This is the kind of book that one is delighted to recommend to pastors and laymen who appreciate a rich biblical content in their reading. As the title and subtitle indicate, a study is made of "Life in the Spirit as Exemplified in the Acts of the Apostles." The author, J. C. Macaulay, who formerly was pastor of the Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, Illinois, is now Instructor in Pastoral and Systematic Theology at Moody Bible Institute. A series of articles by Dr. Macaulay based on the general theme of "Life in the Spirit" was published in the Moody Monthly in 1952. Those articles, with some alterations and additions, reappear in the present volume.

Sixteen different topics are discussed, based upon materials gleaned from the Book of Acts, and in several instances the topics are expository studies of various portions of the Book. Each study is preceded by an analytical or homiletical framework which provides a clue to the leading ideas to be presented. For example, chapter five on "The Enlightenment of the Spirit," a study of Acts 2:22-36, is presented as follows: (1) The factual argument (Acts 2:22-24); (2) the biblical argument (Acts 2:25-31); (3) the experiential argument (Acts 2:32-36). Chapter ten, a study of "The Discipline of the Spirit," is based on the record of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1-11. The material is presented through the following analysis: (1) The sin which provoked the discipline; (2) the severity which marked the discipline; (3) the sanctity which followed the discipline. Other chapters are equally rewarding, each dealing with some phase of the Holy Spirit's activity. The price of the book is modest and its contents will yield rich dividends.

William M. Arnett

The Virgin Mary: The Roman Catholic Marian Doctrine, by Giovanni Miegge, translated by Waldo Smith. London: Lutterworth Press; Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955. 196 pages. 21s. (American edition: Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956.) 196 pages. $3.50.

The ever-increasing emphasis upon the Virgin Mary is one of the most important manifestations of Roman Catholicism in our time. The papal pronouncement of the Dogma of the As-

sumption in 1950, the observation of Marian Year in 1954 that commemorated the one hundredth anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, various Marian Congresses throughout the world, the consecration of entire nations to Mary, and a stepped-up tempo in the stress upon the mediation of Mary between God and man, are bold evidences of this development.

The author, Giovanni Miegge, is Professor of Church History at the Waldensian Faculty of Theology in Rome, the theological seminary of the historic Waldensian Church which since the later Middle Ages has maintained its evangelical belief and worship. Professor Miegge's work is a model of controversial writing--sober, judicial, scholarly. The fact that it was written at the very geographical center of the Roman hierarchy adds value to the book.

Miegge develops the theme historically, beginning with a basic study of "Mary in the Gospel," and traces through eight chapters the gradual elaboration of Marian piety from the humble handmaiden of the Scriptures to her present-day exaltation as Queen of Heaven and Co-Redemptress of the human race. Various titles which have been given to Mary as these have appeared more or less chronologically are discussed in their historical development in several chapters, and then evaluated in the light of the Scriptures, as well as in the light of Protestant and Roman Catholic thinking. These chapters are: "The Eternal Virgin," "The Mother of God," "Queen of Heaven," "The Immaculate," "The Compassionate Mother," and "The Co-Redemptress." Concerning twentieth-century Catholicism, Professor Miegge observes:

> Catholicism in our time feels itself to be living in an age that in devotion to Mary is second to no other, probably not even those great centuries of mariology, the twelfth and thirteenth. The twentieth century presents, moreover, a doctrinal superiority over that golden age of veneration of Mary. On the one hand, Marian theology through a century of work on it has reached a definiteness and an awareness of itself that the great Marian theologians of the Middle Ages, St. Anselm, St. Bonaventura, and St. Bernard did not attain. On the other hand, the desire to make the laity Mary-conscious has never been served by means so potent or a desire so strong.

The excesses of this Roman development is amply indicated by a short popular catechism, Chi e Maria, published in Rome in 1944. Its author, Gabriele M. Roschini, is perhaps the

greatest living specialist in mariology in Italy. Miegge (p. 22) quotes from this catechism as follows:

> The divine Maternity raises her to a dizzy height and places her immediately after God in the vast scale of beings, causing her to be a member of the hypostatic order (in the measure that through her and in her the Word is united hypostatically--that is personally--with human nature), an order superior to the order of nature and grace and glory. For this the Fathers and the Scriptures have almost exhausted their resources of language in exalting her without succeeding in giving her the glory that becomes her. Her greatness borders on the infinite.

From the Marian cult, according to Roman Catholic teaching, the most beneficial and exceptional results are expected, not only for the individual, "because the most holy Virgin protects him in life, in death and after death," but also for the family, the Church and for civil society. Indeed, it is not only useful and beneficial, but necessary. Miegge (p. 182) again quotes in point from Roschini:

> For the adults who know Mary sufficiently well, such a devotion is morally necessary to attain eternal salvation, so that for one of these who showed himself positively indifferent or refused to venerate Mary and invoke her, it is morally impossible that he be saved.

Miegge's stimulating work indicates the wide gulf which separates contemporary Roman Catholicism from the Christocentric emphasis of the New Testament. The tendency of Mariology is to thrust Christ more and more into the background, and to change the merciful and forgiving Saviour into an awesome Lord and an austere Judge of the world to come. It further demonstrates how vain is the visionary hope of those who yearn for a reunion of Christendom. One wishes that every Portestant clergyman and many thoughtful laymen would read this book. It would not only quicken appreciation for the sufficiency of the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ, as Professor Miegge so powerfully proclaims from biblical sources, but it would also be a solemn warning to an all-too-often apathetic Protestantism of the aberration of modern Roman Catholic theology and practice from New Testament Christianity.

William M. Arnett

Revivalism and Social Reform by Timothy L. Smith. Abingdon Press: New York, 1957. 253 pages with index. $4.00.

This well-documented, excitingly new interpretation of mid-nineteenth century American religious history upsets the popular notion that the "social gospel" movement was largely the result of non-spiritual forces at work in society. While not disparaging the material and social conditions of the period which influenced the change of public opinion, the author makes clear that the real humanitarian concern in the country came more from the great holiness revivals than from anything else. Certainly, the oft-repeated charge that revivalistic theology has tended to distract men from the burning social issues of the world is thoroughly repudiated in this book. Citing sources which had heretofore been largely ignored by church historians, Dr. Smith shows that the quest for perfection engendered during the revivals carried with it a compassion which had a practical, ethical application. This healthy spiritual vitality, heightened by the expectation of the millenial kingdom, produced a contagious optimism which could neither retreat before slavery, poverty, and greed nor acquiesce in the presence of denominational narrowness, clerical domination, and unscrupulous dogma. From this tremendous religious ferment, social action was inevitable, as was also a more democratic feeling toward the church, clergy, and doctrine.

In support of this thesis, Timothy L. Smith shows that mass evangelism did not decline in importance after the War of 1812, as many have supposed, but rather increased in significance, particularly in the larger cities. Eventually revival methods were adopted by every major Protestant denomination in the country, and the holiness message gained a wide following in the church, culminating in the great lay revival of 1858 and the year following. The author sees in this yearning for heart purity of the nineteenth century a sort of poor man's counterpart of Emerson's transcendentalist philosophy. Indicative of the same free spirit was a popular reaction against old school Calvinism, which in effect made evangelical Arminianism the practical theology of the day. This was as true of the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist revivalists as of their Methodist brethren.

Many of the conclusions which the author arrives at in this book could have far-reaching ramifications if allowed to pene-

trate some of our prejudices today. For this very reason, many will likely view this work with cautious apprehension. It is doubtful, for example, if the modern religious liberals will enthusiastically accept the facts which reveal the dynamic ethical and social power of the "old fashioned" Gospel. Some staunch Calvinists, of whom I have the greatest respect, may not appreciate the facts which indicate that most revivalists of the period were post-millennial in outlook and strongly addicted to Arminianism, with a bias toward holiness at that. But whatever one's view may be, he has to respect the author's integrity and, I believe, impartiality in reviewing the evidence. The manuscript of this volume was presented for the Ph. D. degree at Harvard University and awarded the Brewer Prize by The American Society of Church History. Among many serious students of history, it is likely to cause a major revision of view in regard to the religious forces at work in moulding the course of American Protestantism.

Robert E. Coleman

The American Sex Revolution, by Pitirim A. Sorokin. Boston: Porter Sargent Publisher, 1956. 186 pages.

For over a quarter of a century the name of Pitirim Sorokin has been associated with the oldest institution of higher learning in the United States. Serving as head of Harvard University's Department of Sociology between 1930 and 1955, and as director of the Harvard Research Center in Creative Altruism, begun in 1949 by the Lilly Foundation, Dr. Sorokin has distinguished himself as one of the world's greatest authorities in social studies. He is a past president of the International Institute of Sociology.

The book under review was written as a result of public demand, after his article on "The Case Against Sex Freedom" appeared in This Week magazine, January 3, 1954. So provocative was the article that it was reprinted in several magazines in this country, reproduced in part in many more periodicals, and issued in leaflet form in tens of thousands of copies by a religio-educational organization, and translated and published in many foreign countries. Urged to publish a more-developed version of the article in non-technical style for the intelligent lay-reader, Dr. Sorokin's answer is the book under consideration.

If Americans were to hear that the Atlantic coast line is sinking at the rate of a foot per day, and that the Mississippi river valley is similarly steadily lowering, it ought not to cause more alarm than to learn of what is happening daily in America's moral life. America is in the midst of a sex revolution that is as important as "the most dramatic political or economic upheaval" through which the nation has ever passed. Dr. Sorokin claims that it is "changing the lives of men and women more radically than any other revolution of our time" (pp. 3-4). Since this revolution "drastically affects the lives of millions, deeply disturbs the community, and decisively influences the future of society. . .it deserves as much public attention as any political or economic change" (p. 7).

With startling statistics, this noted professor points out the rapid increase in American life of divorces, desertions, incompatibility in marriages, promiscuity and sex addiction. He shows that the changed views on sex behavior are largely due to a revaluation of the previously held standards of western man. "The sex drive is now declared to be the most vital mainspring of human behavior. In the name of science, its fullest satisfaction is urged as a necessary condition of man's health and happiness. Sex inhibitions are viewed as the main source of frustrations, mental and physical illness and criminality. Sexual chastity is ridiculed as a prudish superstition. Nuptial loyalty is stigmatized as an antiquated hyprocrisy. . . Sexual profligacy and prowess are proudly glamorized" (p. 17).

The full reaches of this revolution are further evidenced by a survey of current trends in literature, in painting and sculpturing, in music, in stage, movies, television and radio, in the popular press and advertising appeals, in science, ethics, religion, law and political life--in the total cultural moods and movements of the times.

The question, "What are the effects of sex indulgence in the individual and his associates?" is clearly answered by the studies Sorokin has made of the whole history of western civilization. In examining the effects of sexual debauchery upon health and longevity, upon mental health, upon moral integrity, upon creativity and personal happiness, and upon family life, Sorokin presents an alarming picture of what to expect in the future sexualization of American life. By overwhelming evidence he shows that Christianity's emphasis upon chastity and fidelity in the marriage relationship has created the highest cultural standards and values known to man.

This famous sociologist sounds like an evangelist in his sixth chapter entitled "America at the Crossroads." While our na-

tion has generally been alert to the dangers threatening her well-being, she seems oblivious to the "dangerous listless drift" toward the "grim consequences of an overdeveloped sex freedom" (p. 131). Like most peoples and leaders of decaying societies, America's leaders seem unaware of their "cancerous sickness" at this hour (p. 151).

Through the mass-communication media of our day, notably television, increasing sex obsession and sex permeation have gripped American life. Dr. Sorokin deplores the fact that television is now "bringing into millions of our homes the erotically charged, alcoholic atmosphere of night clubs, ugly commercials, and endless murder-and-sex plays. If the majority of our movies concerned the upper region of the moral and social sewers, the bulk of television programs and commercials would sink us into the filth. No wonder that many of us, after being immersed in this muck, come out of it feeling physically, morally and mentally dirty. Some of us can and do cleanse ourselves promptly. Other less fortunate television viewers often lose even the very desire to re-establish their sanity, and remain contaminated by the poisons" (pp. 32-33).

But has America drifted too far toward sex anarchy to recover herself? The noted scholar thinks not. There are definite steps that can yet be taken to return from the prevailing sex-craze of our generation. The author offers corrective teachings, timely advice, and challenging ideals by which America can chart her way back to morality, creativity and happiness.

To some, Sorokin's appraisal may appear unduly severe and pessimistic, but even if his assertions, based upon his comprehensive studies, are but approximations of our national condition, they ought to alarm us and generate some kind of individual and concerted action to stem the rising tide of this debasing sexualization that is invading every area of modern life.

Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses of this study is the famous scholar's little faith in the power of mass evangelism and personal conversions. He seems not to have fully measured the potential of a truly spiritual revival such as the Evangelical Awakening of the Eighteenth Century. But on the whole here is a realistic appraisal of our society's moral condition which ought to be read by every preacher, teacher, civic leader and well-informed parent.

--Delbert R. Rose

In But Not of the World, by Robert W. Spike. New York: Association Press, 1957. 110 pp. $2.00.

Written by request of and published for the Interseminary Committee of the National Council of Churches, this volume was the study book for seminarians who attended the Fourth Triennial Conference of the Interseminary Movement held this past summer at Oberlin College. After serving a downtown New York City church, Dr. Spike, author of this volume, became director of the Department of Evangelism of the Congregational Christian Churches. Having been trained at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University, Dr. Spike brought to his writing task a disciplined mind as well as a pastor-evangelist's concern for the Christian Church.

The author's methodology is fresh and stimulating. He has dramatically highlighted "the tension between theology and practice in the local church" in each of the five chapters. He begins each chapter with an episode from life which embodies the issues to be discussed. The doctrinal implications in each selected life situation are then summarized and viewed in the light of the contemporary cultural climate within which Christian faith must exist and express itself. Each chapter closes with a portrayal of the "desirable practice in the local church" in the light of the Church's heritage and destiny.

Chapter one asks and attempts to answer the question, How does the Church (as a community of believers) differ from a social club or lodge? Chapter two inquires and proposes a reply to the query, How can the Church (as the body of Christ) make significant use of traditions without becoming static and archaic? Chapter three considers, How can the doctrine of the Word of God be applied and put into practice in the local church? Chapter four investigates whether or not there is salvation outside of the Church, and what are to be the proper goals of evangelism. Chapter five considers the kingdom of God and how the Church is related to it.

In the light of the vigorous ecumenical thrust of modern Protestantism and the sub-christian, if not antichristian, standards of the prevailing culture of our times, Dr. Spike has both disturbed and challenged every sector of the Protestant Church that frankly faces the trends of the hour. This author is far from satisfied with things as they are, and yet he

does not leave the Church in the valley of despair. He sees the kingdom of God as that which is now in process of realization through the Church but which is yet to be fully, finally sovereign over all the creation, and that within history.

While this volume stabs us wide awake through its thrusts into the culturally-conditioned heart of the modern Church, it is probably too theologically eclectic to produce a crusading ministry for Christ and His Church. It is not sufficiently definitive in its doctrines of the Word of God, of salvation and of the kingdom of God, to meet and conquer the sinister ideologies which are so militantly moving across the world today in their attempted overthrow of "the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." It is a book too valuable to neglect for its diagnosis of our present condition, but not thoroughgoing enough to effect the necessary remedy for a sickly Church in a dying society. The volume however is another strong evidence that modern churchmen are striving to recover the authority and redemptive power of the apostolic Church.

Delbert R. Rose

Inspiration and Interpretation. Edited by John W. Walvoord. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans's Publishing Co., 1957. 280 pages. $4.50.

This book is the third in a series of volumes by members of the Evangelical Theological Society. It is a symposium produced by ten outstanding scholars who, for the most part, serve in leading evangelical seminaries of America.

The first five contributors clearly establish the fact that the full inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the Scriptures were solidly held as the orthodox view by such key men of the church as Ireneaus, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley. In each case it is abundantly evident that one must beg the question to gain any historical support whatsoever from these giants for the concessions of liberalism and neo-orthodoxy on the fundamental question of the authority of the Scriptures as the very Word of God. Of particular interest to those of the Wesleyan tradition is the unique and penetrating analysis by George A. Turner of "John Wesley As An Interpreter Of Scripture." It is fundamental to an understanding of the Wesleyan heritage.

The next four chapters examine relatively recent attempts to effect a reconciliation between liberal trends of biblical criticism and the inherent values of a "full Christianity." Sanday's compromise is seen to be a sell-out to an immature and changing criticism. Rowley's quest of a "spiritual understanding" of the Bible proves to have a defective standard and ends on the rocks of human limitation and error in the documents. Brunner's attempted synthesis of the orthodox and liberal is a bag of holes through which leaks the basis of Scriptural authority. And Niebuhr, as a Neo-orthodox, judges the Bible by dialectical insights instead of testing those insights by the Bible. Thus it is shown that synthesis is not the answer. The question of orthodoxy is the question of authority. And it is "either-or"; it cannot be "both-and." The Bible is or is not the Word of God.

In the last chapter, Carl F. H. Henry masterfully defends the utter trustworthiness of the Scripture against the various types of attack. He finds the biggest obstacle to faith in the hardness of men's hearts.

The book is thorough, sober, scholarly, well-documented, and convincing. It gives both the historical perspective and an up-to-date evaluation of the present status of the debate on inspiration and authority. One closes the book with a reverent confidence that intelligent investigation and sound scholarship are friends of the evangelical faith in the Word of God and in the God whom it reveals.

Wilber T. Dayton

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